

WILLIAM (JOHNSON) CORY

1823-1892

286.

An Invocation

I NEVER prayed for Dryads, to haunt the woods again ;
More welcome were the presence of hungering, thirst-
ing men,
Whose doubts we could unravel, whose hopes we could
fulfil,
Our wisdom tracing backward, the river to the rill ;
Were such beloved forerunners one summer day restored,
Then, then we might discover the Muse's mystic hoard.

Oh, dear divine Comatas, I would that thou and I
Beneath this broken sunlight this leisure day might lie ;
Where trees from distant forests, whose names were
strange to thee,
Should bend their amorous branches within thy reach to
be,
And flowers thine Hellas knew not, which art hath made
more fair,
Should shed their shining petals upon thy fragrant hair.

Then thou shouldst calmly listen with ever-changing looks
To songs of younger minstrels and plots of modern books,
And wonder at the daring of poets later born,
Whose thoughts are unto thy thoughts as noon-tide is to
morn ;
And little shouldst thou grudge them their greater
strength of soul,
Thy partners in the torch-race, though nearer to the goal.

WILLIAM (JOHNSON) CORY

As when ancestral portraits look gravely from the walls
Upon the youthful baron who treads their echoing halls ;
And whilst he builds new turrets, the thrice ennobled heir
Would gladly wake his grandsire his home and feast to
share ;

So from Ægean laurels that hide thine ancient urn
I fain would call thee hither, my sweeter lore to learn.

Or in thy cedarn prison thou waitest for the bee :
Ah, leave that simple honey, and take thy food from me !
My sun is stooping westward. Entrancèd dreamer, haste :
There 's fruitage in my garden, that I would have thee
taste.

Now lift the lid a moment : now, Dorian shepherd, speak :
Two minds shall flow together, the English and the Greek.

287.

Anterôs

NAIAD, hid beneath the bank
By the willowy river-side,
Where Narcissus gently sank,
Where unmarried Echo died,
Unto thy serene repose
Waft the stricken Anterôs.

Where the tranquil swan is borne,
Imaged in a watery glass,
Where the sprays of fresh pink thorn
Stoop to catch the boats that pass,
Where the earliest orchis grows,
Bury thou fair Anterôs.

WILLIAM (JOHNSON) CORY

Glide we by, with prow and oar :
Ripple shadows off the wave,
And reflected on the shore
Haply play about the grave.
Folds of summer-light enclose
All that once was Anterôs.

On a flickering wave we gaze,
Not upon his answering eyes :
Flower and bird we scarce can praise,
Having lost his sweet replies ;
Cold and mute the river flows
With our tears for Anterôs.

288.

Heraclitus

THEY told me, Heraclitus, they told me you were
dead,
They brought me bitter news to hear and bitter tears to
shed.

I wept as I remember'd how often you and I
Had tired the sun with talking and sent him down the sky.
And now that thou art lying, my dear old Carian guest,
A handful of grey ashes, long, long ago at rest,
Still are thy pleasant voices, thy nightingales, awake ;
For Death, he taketh all away, but them he cannot take.

289.

Remember

YOU come not, as aforetime, to the headstone every
day,
And I, who died, I do not chide because, my friend, you
play ;
Only, in playing, think of him who once was kind and dear,
And, if you see a beauteous thing, just say, he is not here.

COVENTRY PATMORE

1823-1896

290.

Woman

A WOMAN is a foreign land,
Of which, though there he settle young,
A man will ne'er quite understand
The customs, politics and tongue,
The foolish hie them post-haste thro',
See fashions odd and prospects fair,
Learn of the language *How d'ye do?*
And go and brag they have been there.
The most for leave to trade apply
For once at Empire's seat, her heart,
Then get what knowledge ear and eye
Glean chancewise in the life-long mart.
And certain others, few and fit,
Attach them to the Court and see
The Country's best, its accent hit,
And partly sound its Polity.

291.

Thoughts

i. CONSTANCY

I VOW'D unvarying faith ; and she,
To whom in full I pay that vow,
Rewards me with variety
Which men who change can never know.

COVENTRY PATMORE

ii. SHAME

THE wrong is made and measured by
The right's inverted dignity.
Change love to shame, as love is high
So low in hell your bed shall be.

iii. ATTAINMENT

YOU love ? That 's high as you shall go :
For 'tis as true as Gospel text,
Not noble then is never so,
Either in this world or the next.

iv. SENSUALITY

WHO pleasure follows pleasure slays ;
God's wrath upon himself he wreaks ;
But all delights rejoice his days
Who takes with thanks and never seeks.

v. COURTESY

LOVE'S perfect blossom only blows
Where noble manners veil defect.
Angels may be familiar ; those
Who err each other must respect.

292.

The Kiss

'**I** SAW you take his kiss !' ' 'Tis true.'
' O modesty !' ' 'Twas strictly kept :
He thought me asleep—at least, I knew
He thought I thought he thought I slept.'

293.

Departure

IT was not like your great and gracious ways !
 Do you, that have naught other to lament,
 Never, my Love, repent
 Of how, that July afternoon,
 You went,
 With sudden, unintelligible phrase,
 And frighten'd eye,
 Upon your journey of so many days
 Without a single kiss, or a good-bye ?
 I knew, indeed, that you were parting soon ;
 And so we sate, within the low sun's rays,
 You whispering to me, for your voice was weak,
 Your harrowing praise.
 Well, it was well
 To hear you such things speak,
 And I could tell
 What made your eyes a growing gloom of love,
 As a warm South-wind sombres a March grove.
 And it was like your great and gracious ways
 To turn your talk on daily things, my Dear,
 Lifting the luminous, pathetic lash
 To let the laughter flash,
 Whilst I drew near,
 Because you spoke so low that I could scarcely hear.
 But all at once to leave me at the last,
 More at the wonder than the loss aghast,
 With huddled, unintelligible phrase,
 And frighten'd eye,
 And go your journey of all days
 With not one kiss, or a good-bye,
 And the only loveless look the look with which you pass'd :
 'Twas all unlike your great and gracious ways.

The Toys

MY little Son, who look'd from thoughtful eyes
 And moved and spoke in quiet grown-up wise,
 Having my law the seventh time disobey'd,
 I struck him, and dismiss'd
 With hard words and unkiss'd,
 —His Mother, who was patient, being dead.
 Then, fearing lest his grief should hinder sleep,
 I visited his bed,
 But found him slumbering deep,
 With darken'd eyelids, and their lashes yet
 From his late sobbing wet.
 And I, with moan,
 Kissing away his tears, left others of my own ;
 For, on a table drawn beside his head,
 He had put, within his reach,
 A box of counters and a red-vein'd stone,
 A piece of glass abraded by the beach,
 And six or seven shells,
 A bottle with bluebells,
 And two French copper coins, ranged there with careful art,
 To comfort his sad heart.
 So when that night I pray'd
 To God, I wept, and said :
 Ah ! when at last we lie with trancèd breath,
 Not vexing Thee in death,
 And Thou rememberest of what toys
 We made our joys,
 How weakly understood
 Thy great commanded good,
 Then, fatherly not less
 Than I whom Thou hast moulded from the clay,
 Thou'lt leave Thy wrath, and say,
 ' I will be sorry for their childishness.'

295.

A Farewell

WITH all my will, but much against my heart,
 We two now part.
 My Very Dear,
 Our solace is, the sad road lies so clear.
 It needs no art,
 With faint, averted feet
 And many a tear,
 In our opposèd paths to persevere.
 Go thou to East, I West.
 We will not say
 There 's any hope, it is so far away.
 But, O, my Best!
 When the one darling of our widowhead,
 The nursling Grief,
 Is dead,
 And no dews blur our eyes
 To see the peach-bloom come in evening skies,
 Perchance we may,
 Where now this night is day,
 And even through faith of still averted feet,
 Making full circle of our banishment,
 Amazèd meet;
 The bitter journey to the bourne so sweet
 Seasoning the termless feast of our content
 With tears of recognition never dry.

296.

Magna Est Veritas

HERE, in this little Bay,
 Full of tumultuous life and great repose,
 Where, twice a day,
 The purposeless, glad ocean comes and goes,
 Under high cliffs, and far from the huge town,
 I sit me down.
 For want of me the world's course will not fail :
 When all its work is done, the lie shall rot ;
 The truth is great, and shall prevail,
 When none cares whether it prevail or not.

297.

The First Spousal

TWICE thirty centuries and more ago,
 All in a heavenly Abyssinian vale,
 Man first met woman ; and the ruddy snow
 On many-ridgèd Abora turn'd pale,
 And the song choked within the nightingale.
 A mild white furnace in the thorough blast
 Of purest spirit seem'd She as she pass'd ;
 And of the Man enough that this be said,
 He look'd her Head.

Towards their bower
 Together as they went,
 With hearts conceiving torrents of content,
 And linger'd prologue fit for Paradise,
 He, gathering power
 From dear persuasion of the dim-lit hour,
 And doubted sanction of her sparkling eyes,
 Thus supplicates her conjugal assent,

COVENTRY PATMORE

And thus she makes replies :

‘ Lo, Eve, the Day burns on the snowy height,
But here is mellow night ! ’

‘ Here let us rest. The languor of the light
Is in my feet.

It is thy strength, my Love, that makes me weak ;
Thy strength it is that makes my weakness sweet.
What would thy kiss’d lips speak ? ’

‘ See, what a world of roses I have spread
To make the bridal bed.
Come, Beauty’s self and Love’s, thus to thy throne be
led ! ’

‘ My Lord, my Wisdom, nay !
Does not yon love-delighted Planet run,
(Haply against her heart,)
A space apart
For ever from her strong-persuading Sun !
O say,
Shall we no voluntary bars
Set to our drift ? I, Sister of the Stars,
And Thou, my glorious, course-compelling Day ! ’

‘ Yea, yea !
Was it an echo of her coming word
Which, ere she spake, I heard ?
Or through what strange distrust was I, her Head,
Not first this thing to have said ?
Always
Speaks not within my breast
The uncompulsive, great and sweet behest
Of something bright,
Not named, not known, and yet more manifest
Than is the morn,
The sun being just at point then to be born ?
O Eve, take back thy “ Nay ”.

COVENTRY PATMORE

Trust me, Belovèd, ever in all to mean
Thy blissful service, sacrificial, keen ;
But bondless be that service, and let speak—'

' This other world of roses in my cheek,
Which hide them in thy breast, and deepening seek
That thou decree if they mean Yea or Nay.'

' Did e'er so sweet a word such sweet gainsay ! '

' And when I lean, Love, on you, thus, and smile
So that my Nay seems Yea,

You must the while

Thence be confirm'd that I deny you still.'

' I will, I will ! '

' And when my arms are round your neck, like this,
And I, as now,

Melt like a golden ingot in your kiss,

Then, more than ever, shall your splendid word

Be as Archangel Michael's severing sword !

Speak, speak !

Your might, Love, makes me weak,

Your might it is that makes my weakness sweet.'

' I vow, I vow ! '

' And are you happy, O my Hero and Lord ;
And is your joy complete ? '

' Yea, with my joyful heart my body rocks,
And joy comes down from Heaven in floods and shocks,
As from Mount Abora comes the avalanche.'

' My Law, my Light !

Then am I yours as your high mind may list.

No wile shall lure you, none can I resist ! '

Thus the first Eve

With much enamour'd Adam did enact

Their mutual free contract

Of virgin spousals, blissful beyond flight

Of modern thought, with great intention staunch,

COVENTRY PATMORE

Though unobliged until that binding pact.
Whether She kept her word, or He the mind
To hold her, wavering, to his own restraint,
Answer, ye pleasures faint,
Ye fiery throes, and upturn'd eyeballs blind
Of sick-at-heart Mankind,
Whom nothing succour can,
Until a heaven-caress'd and happier Eve
Be join'd with some glad Saint
In like espousals, blessed upon Earth,
And she her Fruit forth bring ;
No numb, chill-hearted, shaken-witted thing,
'Plaining his little span,
But of proud virgin joy the appropriate birth,
The Son of God and Man.

298. *Auras of Delight*

BEAUTIFUL habitations, auras of delight !
Who shall bewail the crags and bitter foam
And angry sword-blades flashing left and right
Which guard your glittering height,
That none thereby may come !
The vision which we have
Revere we so,
That yet we crave
To foot those fields of ne'er-profanèd snow ? . . .
And Him I thank, who can make live again,
The dust, but not the joy we once profane,
That I, of ye,
Beautiful habitations, auras of delight,
In childish years and since had sometime sense and sight,
But that ye vanish'd quite,

COVENTRY PATMORE

Even from memory,
Ere I could get my breath, and whisper 'See!'
But did for me
They altogether die,
Those trackless glories glimps'd in upper sky?
Were they of chance, or vain,
Nor good at all again
For curb of heart or fret?
Nay, though, by grace,
Lest haply I refuse God to His face,
Their likeness wholly I forget,
Ah! yet,
Often in straits which else for me were ill,
I mind me still
I *did* respire the lonely auras sweet,
I *did* the blest abodes behold, and, at the mountains' feet,
Bathed in the holy Stream by Hermon's thymy hill.

SYDNEY DOBELL

1824-1874

299. *The Ballad of Keith of Ravelston*

THE murmur of the mourning ghost
That keeps the shadowy kine,
'O, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!'

Ravelston, Ravelston,
The merry path that leads
Down the golden morning hill,
And thro' the silver meads;

SYDNEY DOBELL

Ravelston, Ravelston,
The stile beneath the tree,
The maid that kept her mother's kine,
The song that sang she !

She sang her song, she kept her kine,
She sat beneath the thorn,
When Andrew Keith of Ravelston
Rode thro' the Monday morn.

His henchmen sing, his hawk-bells ring,
His belted jewels shine ;
O, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line !

Year after year, where Andrew came,
Comes evening down the glade,
And still there sits a moonshine ghost
Where sat the sunshine maid.

Her misty hair is faint and fair,
She keeps the shadowy kine ;
O, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line !

I lay my hand upon the stile,
The stile is lone and cold,
The burnie that goes babbling by
Says naught that can be told.

Yet, stranger ! here, from year to year,
She keeps her shadowy kine ;
O, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line !

SYDNEY DOBELL

Step out three steps, where Andrew stood—
Why blanch thy cheeks for fear?
The ancient stile is not alone,
'Tis not the burn I hear!

She makes her immemorial moan,
She keeps her shadowy kine;
O, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!

300.

Isabel

MY heart's despair
Looks for thee ere the firstling smoke hath curl'd;
While the rapt earth is at her morning pray'r,
Ere yet she putteth on her workday air
And robes her for the world,
Isabel.

When the sun-burst is o'er
My lonely way about the world I take,
Doing and saying much, and feeling more,
And all things for thy sake,
Isabel.

But never once I dare
To see thine image till the day be new,
And lip hath sullied not the unbreathed air,
And waking eyes are few,
Isabel.

SYDNEY DOBELL

Then that lost form appears
Which was a joy to few on earth but me :
In the young light I see thy guileless glee,
In the deep dew's thy tears,
Isabel.

So with Promethean moan
In widowhood renew'd I learn to grieve ;
Blest with one only thought—that I alone
Can fade : that thou thro' years shalt still shine on
In beauty, as in beauty art thou gone,
Thou morn that knew no eve,
Isabel.

In beauty art thou gone ;
As some bright meteor gleams across the night,
Gazed on by all, but understood by none,
And dying by its own excess of light,
Isabel.

301.

Return !

RETURN, return ! all night my lamp is burning,
All night, like it, my wide eyes watch and burn ;
Like it, I fade and pale, when day returning
Bears witness that the absent can return,
Return, return.

Like it, I lessen with a lengthening sadness,
Like it, I burn to waste and waste to burn,
Like it, I spend the golden oil of gladness
To feed the sorrowful signal for return,
Return, return.

SYDNEY DOBELL.

Like it, like it, whene'er the east wind sings,
I bend and shake ; like it, I quake and yearn,
When Hope's late butterflies, with whispering wings,
Fly in out of the dark, to fall and burn—
Burn in the watchfire of return,
Return, return.

Like it, the very flame whereby I pine
Consumes me to its nature. While I mourn
My soul becomes a better soul than mine,
And from its brightening beacon I discern
My starry love go forth from me, and shine
Across the seas a path for thy return,
Return, return.

Return, return ! all night I see it burn,
All night it prays like me, and lifts a twin
Of palmèd praying hands that meet and yearn—
Yearn to the impleaded skies for thy return.
Day, like a golden fetter, locks them in,
And wans the light that withers, tho' it burn
As warmly still for thy return ;
Still thro' the splendid load uplifts the thin
Pale, paler, palest patience that can learn
Naught but that votive sign for thy return—
That single suppliant sign for thy return,
Return, return.

Return, return ! lest haply, love, or e'er
Thou touch the lamp the light have ceased to burn,
And thou, who thro' the window didst discern
The wonted flame, shalt reach the topmost stair
To find no wide eyes watching there,
No wither'd welcome waiting thy return !

SYDNEY DOBELL

A passing ghost, a smoke-wreath in the air,
The flameless ashes, and the soulless urn,
Warm with the famish'd fire that lived to burn—
Burn out its lingering life for thy return,
Its last of lingering life for thy return,
Its last of lingering life to light thy late return,
Return, return.

302.

An Even-Song

I N the spring twilight, in the colour'd twilight,
Whereto the latter primroses are stars,
And early nightingale
Letteth her love adown the tender wind,
That thro' the eglantine
In mixed delight the fragrant music bloweth
On to me,
Where in the twilight, in the colour'd twilight
I sit beside the thorn upon the hill.
The mavis sings upon the old oak tree
Sweet and strong,
Strong and sweet,
Soft, sweet, and strong,
And with his voice interpreteth the silence
Of the dim vale when Philomel is mute!
The dew lies like a light upon the grass,
The cloud is as a swan upon the sky,
The mist is as a brideweed on the moon.
The shadows new and sweet
Like maids unwonted in the dues of joy
Play with the meadow flowers,
And give with fearful fancies more and less,
And come, and go, and flit

SYDNEY DOBELL

A brief emotion in the moving air,
And now are stirr'd to flight, and now are kind,
Unset, uncertain, as the cheek of Love.
As tho' amid the eve
Stood Spring with fluttering breast,
And like a butterfly upon a flower,
Spreading and closing with delight's excess,
A-sudden fann'd and shut her tinted wings.
In the spring twilight, in the colour'd twilight,
Ere Hesper, eldest child of Night, run forth
On mountain-top to see
If Day hath left the dale,
And hears, well-pleased, the dove
From ancient elm and high
In murmuring dreams still bid the sun good night,
And sound of lowing kine,
And echoes long and clear,
And herdsman's evening call,
And bells of penning folds,
Sweet and low ;
O maid, as fair as thou
Behold the young May moon !
O, happy, happy maid !
With love as young as she
In the spring twilight, in the colour'd twilight,
Meet, meet me, by the thorn upon the hill !

303.

Eden-Gate

THERE grew a lowly flower by Eden-gate
Among the thorns and thistles. High the palm
Branch'd o'er her, and imperial by her side
Upstood the sunburnt lily of the East.

SYDNEY DOBELL

The goodly gate swung oft, with many gods
Going and coming, and the spice-winds blew
Music and murmurings, and paradise
Well'd over and enrich'd the outer wild.

Then the palm trembled fast-bound by the feet,
And the imperial Lily bow'd her down
With yearning, but they could not enter in.

The lowly flower she look'd up to the palm
And lily, and at eve was full of dews,
And hung her head and wept and said, ' Ah these
Are tall and fair, and shall I enter in ? '

There came an angel to the gate at even,
A weary angel, with dishevell'd hair ;
For he had wander'd far, and as he went,
The blossoms of his crown fell one by one
Thro' many nights, and seem'd a falling star.

He saw the lovely flower by Eden-gate,
And cried, ' Ah, pure and beautiful ! ' and turn'd
And stoop'd to her and wound her in his hair,
And in his golden hair she enter'd in.

Husband ! I was the weed at Eden-gate ;
I look'd up to the lily and the palm
Above me, and I wept and said, ' Ah these
Are tall and fair, and shall I enter in ? '

And one came by me to the gate at even,
And stoop'd to me and wound me in his hair
And in his golden hair I enter'd in.

i

MEN say, Columbia, we shall hear thy guns.
 But in what tongue shall be thy battle-cry?
 Not that our sires did love in years gone by,
 When all the Pilgrim Fathers were little sons
 In merry homes of England? Back, and see
 Thy satchell'd ancestor! Behold, he runs
 To mine, and, clasp'd, they tread the equal lea
 To the same village-school, where side by side
 They spell 'Our Father'. Hard by, the twin-pride
 Of that grey hall whose ancient oriel gleams
 Thro' yon baronial pines, with looks of light
 Our sister-mothers sit beneath one tree.
 Meanwhile our Shakespeare wanders past and dreams
 His Helena and Hermia. Shall we fight?

ii

NOR force nor fraud shall sunder us! O ye
 Who north or south, on east or western land,
 Native to noble sounds, say truth for truth,
 Freedom for freedom, love for love, and God
 For God; Oh ye who in eternal youth
 Speak with a living and creative flood
 This universal English, and do stand
 Its breathing book; live worthy of that grand
 Heroic utterance—parted, yet a whole,
 Far, yet unsever'd,—children brave and free
 Of the great Mother-tongue, and ye shall be
 Lords of an Empire wide as Shakespeare's soul,
 Sublime as Milton's immemorial theme,
 And rich as Chaucer's speech, and fair as Spenser's dream.

The Fairies

UP the airy mountain,
 Down the rushy glen,
 We daren't go a-hunting
 For fear of little men ;
 Wee folk, good folk,
 Trooping all together ;
 Green jacket, red cap,
 And white owl's feather !

Down along the rocky shore
 Some make their home,
 They live on crispy pancakes
 Of yellow tide-foam ;
 Some in the reeds
 Of the black mountain lake,
 With frogs for their watch-dogs,
 All night awake.

High on the hill-top
 The old King sits ;
 He is now so old and gray
 He's nigh lost his wits.
 With a bridge of white mist
 Columkill he crosses,
 On his stately journeys
 From Slieveleague to Rosses ;
 Or going up with music
 On cold starry nights
 To sup with the Queen
 Of the gay Northern Lights.

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM

They stole little Bridget
For seven years long ;
When she came down again
Her friends were all gone.
They took her lightly back,
Between the night and morrow,
They thought that she was fast asleep,
But she was dead with sorrow.
They have kept her ever since
Deep within the lake,
On a bed of flag-leaves,
Watching till she wake.

By the craggy hill-side,
Through the mosses bare,
They have planted thorn-trees
For pleasure here and there.
If any man so daring
As dig them up in spite,
He shall find their sharpest thorns
In his bed at night.

Up the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting
For fear of little men ;
Wee folk, good folk,
Trooping all together ;
Green jacket, red cap,
And white owl's feather !

306. *The Lover and Birds*

WITHIN a budding grove
 In April's ear sang every bird his best,
 But not a song to pleasure my unrest
 Or touch the tears unwept of bitter love ;
 Some spake, methought, with pity, some as if in jest :
 To every word
 Of every bird
 I listen'd, and replied as it behove.

Scream'd Chaffinch, ' Sweet, sweet, sweet !
 Pretty lovey, come and meet me here !'
 ' Chaffinch,' quoth I, ' be dumb awhile, in fear
 Thy darling prove no better than a cheat,
 And never come, or fly when wintry days appear.'
 Yet from a twig
 With voice so big,
 The little fowl his utterance did repeat.

Then I, ' The man forlorn
 Hears Earth send up a foolish noise aloft.'
 — ' And what'll *he* do ? What'll *he* do ?' scoff'd
 The Blackbird, standing in an ancient thorn,
 Then spread his sooty wings and flitted to the croft
 With cackling laugh :
 Whom I, being half
 Enraged, call'd after, giving back his scorn.

Worse mock'd the Thrush, ' Die ! die !
 Oh, could he do it ? could he do it ? Nay !
 Be quick ! be quick ! Here, here, here !' (went his lay)

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM

‘Take heed! take heed!’ then, ‘Why? why? why?
why? why?’

See-ee now! see-ee now!’ (he drawl’d) ‘Back! back!
back! R-r-r-run away!’

O Thrush, be still!

Or, at thy will,

Seek some less sad interpreter than I.

‘Air, air! blue air and white!

Whither I flee, whither, O whither, O whither I flee!’

(Thus the Lark hurried, mounting from the lea)

‘Hills, countries, many waters glittering bright,
Whither I see, whither I see! deeper, deeper, deeper,
whither I see, see, see!’

‘Gay Lark,’ I said,

‘The song that’s bred

In happy nest may well to heaven make flight.’

‘There’s something, something sad,

I half remember’—piped a broken strain.

Well sung, sweet Robin! Robin sung again:

‘Spring’s opening cheerily, cheerily! be we glad!’
Which moved, I wist not why, me melancholy mad,

Till now, grown meek,

With wetted cheek,

Most comforting and gentle thoughts I had.

307.

A Memory

FOUR ducks on a pond,
A grass-bank beyond,
A blue sky of spring,
White clouds on the wing:
What a little thing
To remember for years—
To remember with tears!

308.

That Holy Thing

THEY all were looking for a king
 To slay their foes and lift them high :
 Thou cam'st, a little baby thing
 That made a woman cry.

O Son of Man, to right my lot
 Naught but Thy presence can avail ;
 Yet on the road Thy wheels are not,
 Nor on the sea Thy sail !

My how or when Thou wilt not heed,
 But come down thine own secret stair,
 That Thou mayst answer all my need—
 Yea, every bygone prayer.

309.

Dorcas

IF I might guess, then guess I would
 That, mid the gather'd folk,
 This gentle Dorcas one day stood,
 And heard when Jesus spoke.

She saw the woven seamless coat—
 Half envious, for his sake :
 'Oh, happy hands,' she said, 'that wrought
 The honoured thing to make !'

Her eyes with longing tears grow dim :
 She never can come nigh
 To work one service poor for him
 For whom she glad would die !

GEORGE MAC DONALD

But hark, he speaks ! O, precious word !
And she has heard indeed !
' When did we see thee naked, Lord,
And clothed thee in thy need ?

' The King shall answer, Inasmuch
As to my brethren ye
Did it—even to the least of such—
Ye did it unto me.'

Home, home she went, and plied the loom,
And Jesus' poor array'd,
She died—they wept about the room,
And showed the coats she made.

310

Mammon Marriage

THE croak of a raven hoar !
A dog's howl, kennel-tied !
Loud shuts the carriage-door :
The two are away on their ghastly ride
To Death's salt shore !

Where are the love and the grace ?
The bridegroom is thirsty and cold !
The bride's skull sharpens her face !
But the coachman is driving, jubilant, bold,
The devil's pace.

The horses shiver'd and shook
Waiting gaunt and haggard
With sorry and evil look ;
But swift as a drunken wind they stagger'd
'Longst Lethe brook.

GEORGE MAC DONALD

Long since, they ran no more ;
Heavily pulling they died
On the sand of the hopeless shore
Where never swell'd or sank a tide,
And the salt burns sore.

Flat their skeletons lie,
White shadows on shining sand ;
The crusted reins go high
To the crumbling coachman's bony hand
On his knees awry.

Side by side, jarring no more,
Day and night side by side,
Each by a doorless door,
Motionless sit the bridegroom and bride
On the Dead-Sea-shore.

311.

Sonnet

THIS infant world has taken long to make,
Nor hast Thou done with it, but mak'st it yet,
And wilt be working on when death has set
A new mound in some churchyard for my sake.
On flow the centuries without a break ;
Uprise the mountains, ages without let ;
The lichens suck ; the hard rock's breast they fret ;
Years more than past the young earth yet will take.
But in the dumbness of the rolling time
No veil of silence shall encompass me—
Thou wilt not once forget and let me be ;
Rather Thou wouldst some old chaotic prime
Invade, and, moved by tenderness sublime,
Unfold a world that I, thy child, might see.

312.

Song

WHY do the houses stand
 When they that built them are gone ;
 When remaineth even of one
 That lived there and loved and planned
 Not a face, not an eye, not a hand,
 Only here and there a bone ?
 Why do the houses stand
 When they who built them are gone ?
 Oft in the moonlighted land
 When the day is overblown,
 With happy memorial moan
 Sweet ghosts in a loving band
 Roam through the houses that stand—
 For the builders are not gone.

WALTER C. SMITH

1824-1908

313.

Glenaradale

THERE is no fire of the crackling boughs
 On the hearth of our fathers,
 There is no lowing of brown-eyed cows
 On the green meadows,
 Nor do the maidens whisper vows
 In the still gloaming,
 Glenaradale.

WALTER C. SMITH

There is no bleating of sheep on the hill
Where the mists linger,
There is no sound of the low hand-mill
Ground by the women,
And the smith's hammer is lying still
By the brown anvil,
Glenaradale.

Ah ! we must leave thee and go away
Far from Ben Luibh,
Far from the graves where we hoped to lay
Our bones with our fathers',
Far from the kirk where we used to pray
Lowly together,
Glenaradale.

We are not going for hunger or wealth,
For the gold and silver,
We are not going to seek for health
On the flat prairies,
Nor yet for the lack of fruitful tilth
On thy green pastures,
Glenaradale.

Content with the croft and the hill were we,
As all our fathers,
Content with the fish in the lake to be
Carefully netted,
And garments spun of the wool from thee,
O black-faced wether
Of Glenaradale !

No father here but would give a son
For the old country,

WALTER C. SMITH

And his mother the sword would have girded on
To fight her battles :
Many 's the battle that has been won
By the brave tartans,
Glenaradale.

But the big-horn'd stag and his hinds, we know,
In the high corries,
And the salmon that swirls in the pool below
Where the stream rushes
Are more than the hearts of men, and so
We leave thy green valley,
Glenaradale.

WILLIAM ALEXANDER
ARCHBISHOP OF ARMAGH

314. *From 'A Vision of Oxford'* ¹⁸²⁴⁻¹⁹¹¹

METHOUGHT I met a Lady yester even ;
A passionless grief, that had nor tear nor wail,
Sat on her pure proud face, that gleam'd to Heaven
White as a moonlit sail.

She spake : ' On this pale brow are looks of youth,
Yet angels listening on the argent floor
Know that these lips have been proclaiming truth
Nine hundred years and more ;

' And Isis knows what time-grey towers rear'd up,
Gardens and groves and cloister'd halls are mine ;
When quaff my sons from many a myrrhine cup
Draughts of ambrosial wine.

WILLIAM ALEXANDER

' He knows how night by night my lamps are lit,
How day by day my bells are ringing clear,—
Mother of ancient lore and Attic wit
And discipline severe.

' And I have led my children on steep mountains
By fine attraction of my spirit brought
Up to the dark inexplicable fountains
That are the springs of thought :

' Led them, where on the old poetic shore
The flowers that change not with the changing moon
Breathe round young hearts, as breathes the sycamore
About the bees in June.

' And I will bear them as on eagle's wings,
To leave them bow'd before the sapphire Throne,
High o'er the haunts where dying Pleasure sings
With sweet and swan-like tone.

' And I will lead the age's great expansions,
Progressive circles t'ward thought's Sabbath rest,
And point beyond them to the many mansions
Where Christ is with the blest.

315. *The Birthday Crown*

IF aught of simple song have power to touch
Your silent being, O ye country flowers,
Twisted by tender hands
Into a royal brede,

WILLIAM ALEXANDER

O hawthorn, tear thou not the soft white brow
Of the small queen upon her rustic throne ;
 But breathe thy finest scent
 Of almond round about.

And thou, laburnum, and what other hue
Tinct deeper gives variety of gold,
 Inwoven lily, and vetch
 Bedropp'd with summer's blood,

I charge you wither not this long June day !
O, wither not until the sunset come,
 Until the sunset's shaft
 Slope through the chestnut tree ;

Until she sit, high-gloried round about
With the great light above her mimic court—
 Her threads of sunny hair
 Girt sunnily by you !

What other crown that queen may wear one day,
What drops may touch her forehead not of balm,
 What thorns, what cruel thorns,
 I will not guess to-day.

Only, before she is discrown'd of you,
Ye dying flowers, and thou, O dying light,
 My prayer shall rise—' O Christ !
 Give her the unfading crown.

' The crown of blossoms worn by happy bride,
The thorny crown o'er pale and dying lips,
 I dare not choose for her—
 Give her the unfading crown ! '

ADELAIDE ANNE PROCTER

1825-1864

316. *The Warrior to His Dead Bride*

I F in the fight my arm was strong
And forced my foes to yield,
If conquering and unhurt I come
Back from the battle-field—
It is because thy prayers have been
My safeguard and my shield.

Thy heart, my love, still beats in Heaven
With the same love divine
That made thee stoop to such a soul,
So hard, so stern, as mine—
My eyes have learnt to weep, Beloved,
Since last they look'd on thine.

I hear thee murmur words of peace,
Thro' the dim midnight air ;
And a calm falls from the angel stars
And soothes my great despair—
The heavens themselves look brighter, Love,
Since thy sweet soul is there.

THOMAS WOOLNER

1825-1892

317. *My Beautiful Lady*

I LOVE my Lady ; she is very fair ;
Her brow is wan and bound by simple hair ;
Her spirit sits aloft and high,
But glances from her tender eye
In sweetness droopingly.

As a young forest while the wind drives thro',
My life is stirr'd when she breaks on my view ;
Her beauty grants my will no choice
But silent awe, till she rejoice
My longing with her voice.

Her warbling voice, tho' ever low and mild,
Oft makes me feel as strong wine would a child ;
And tho' her hand be airy light
Of touch, it moves me with its might
As would a sudden fright.

A hawk high poised in air, whose nerved wing-tips
Tremble with might suppress'd before he dips,
In vigilance, scarce more intense
Than I, when her voice holds my sense
Contented in suspense.

Her mention of a thing, august or poor,
Makes it far nobler than it was before :
As, where the sun strikes, life will gush
And what is pale receive a flush,
Rich hues, a richer blush.

THOMAS WOOLNER

My Lady's name when I hear strangers use,
Not meaning her, to me seems lax misuse ;
I love none but my Lady's name ;
Maud, Grace, Rose, Marian, all the same
Are harsh, or blank and tame.

My lady walks as I have watch'd a swan
Swim where a glory on the water shone :
There ends of willow-branches ride
Quivering in the flowing tide,
By the deep river's side.

Fresh beauties, howsoe'er she moves, are stirr'd ;
As the sunn'd bosom of a humming-bird
At each pant lifts some fiery hue,
Fierce gold, bewildering green or blue—
The same, yet ever new.

FRANCIS TURNER PALGRAVE

1825-1897

318.

Eutopia

THERE is a garden where lilies
And roses are side by side ;
And all day between them in silence
The silken butterflies glide.

I may not enter the garden,
Tho' I know the road thereto ;
And morn by morn to the gateway
I see the children go.

FRANCIS TURNER PALGRAVE

They bring back light on their faces ;
But they cannot bring back to me
What the lilies say to the roses,
Or the songs of the butterflies be.

RICHARD DODDRIDGE BLACKMORE

1825-1900

319. *Dominus Illuminatio Mea*

IN the hour of death, after this life's whim,
When the heart beats low, and the eyes grow dim,
And pain has exhausted every limb—
The lover of the Lord shall trust in Him.

When the will has forgotten the lifelong aim,
And the mind can only disgrace its fame,
And a man is uncertain of his own name—
The power of the Lord shall fill this frame.

When the last sigh is heaved, and the last tear shed,
And the coffin is waiting beside the bed,
And the widow and child forsake the dead—
The angel of the Lord shall lift this head.

For even the purest delight may pall,
And power must fail, and the pride must fall,
And the love of the dearest friends grow small—
But the glory of the Lord is all in all.

DINAH MARIA (MULOCK) CRAIK

1826-1887

320.

Douglas

'Douglas, Douglas, tender and true'

COULD ye come back to me, Douglas, Douglas,
In the old likeness that I knew,
I would be so faithful, so loving, Douglas,
Douglas, Douglas, tender and true!

Never a scornful word should grieve ye,
I'd smile on ye sweet as the angels do:
Sweet as your smile on me shone ever,
Douglas, Douglas, tender and true.

O, to call back the days that are not!
My eyes were blinded, your words were few:
Do you know the truth now, up in heaven,
Douglas, Douglas, tender and true?

I never was worthy of you, Douglas—
Not half worthy the like of you:
Now all men beside seem to me like shadows—
I love you, Douglas, tender and true.

Stretch out your hand to me, Douglas, Douglas,
Drop forgiveness from heaven like dew;
As I lay my heart on your dead heart, Douglas,
Douglas, Douglas, tender and true!

MORTIMER COLLINS

1827-1876

321.

Queen and Slave

O HAPPY life, whose love is found !
O happy love, whose life is free !
O happy strings whose soft notes sound
Athwart the sea !

The sea has mistress in the moon,
The moon has lover in the sea :
They meet too late, they part too soon—
And so do we.

I am adored, yet must obey ;
I am a queen, and yet a slave.
It seems to me the self-same way
With moon and wave.

O be it so ! O let it be !
O may I always rule and serve,
And live the life whose love is free,
And never swerve !

322.

An Early Christian

CHRISTIANS were on the earth ere Christ was born ;
 His laws, not yet a code, were follow'd still
 By sightless Pagans in the dark forlorn,
 Groping toward the light, as blind men will :
 Thousands of years ago men dared to die
 Loving their enemies—and wonder'd why !

Who that has read in Homer's truthful page
 Of brave Achilles brooding o'er the corse
 Of Hector sacrificed—less to his rage
 Than iron custom's law, without remorse
 Claiming revenge for mild Patroclus slain—
 Can doubt he wish'd great Hector lived again ?

Full half the tears he shed were Hector's due,
 Whose noble soul he had to Hades sent.
 Why—was Patroclus gainer, if they knew ?
 Methinks I see Achilles in his tent
 Beating his breast and twitching at his hair,
 Wanting a few words only—the Lord's Prayer !

And more for his than Priam's sake I feel
 Rejoiced when I am told the good old man
 Comes with his simple fatherly appeal
 For Hector's body—pointing out a plan
 Of kindness, atonement, and of peace,
 That in Achilles' breast hate's strife may cease.

ROBERT BARNABAS BROUGH

What joy he must have felt to see a way
To turn him from revenge's irksome path ;
Like a worn seaman who descries the day
After a night-watch 'mid the tempest's wrath.
Methinks I see him in his huge arms bear
Great Hector's body, with admiring care,

And, chuckling to evade the sentries dull,
Convey it thro' the sleeping camp with glee,
With sense of lightness, new and wonderful,
To grateful Priam's car. 'What can it be,'
—I hear him ask—'thus makes my bosom glow,
Showing such weakness to a fallen foe?'

WALTER THORNBURY

1828-1878

323. *The Court Historian*

LOWER EMPIRE. Circa A. D. 700

THE Monk Arnulphus uncork'd his ink
That shone with a blood-red light
Just now as the sun began to sink ;
His vellum was pumiced a silvery white ;
'The Basileus'—for so he began—
'Is a royal sagacious Mars of a man,
Than the very lion bolder ;
He has married the stately widow of Thrace—'
'Hush !' cried a voice at his shoulder.

WALTER THORNBURY

His palette gleam'd with a burnish'd green,
Bright as a dragon-fly's skin :
His gold-leaf shone like the robe of a queen,
His azure glow'd as a cloud worn thin,
Deep as the blue of the king-whale's lair :
'The Porphyrogenita Zoë the fair
Is about to wed with a Prince much older,
Of an unpropitious mien and look—'
'Hush !' cried a voice at his shoulder.

The red flowers trellis'd the parchment page,
The birds leap'd up on the spray,
The yellow fruit sway'd and droop'd and swung,
It was Autumn mixt up with May.
(O, but his cheek was shrivell'd and shrunk !)
'The child of the Basileus,' wrote the Monk,
'Is golden-hair'd—tender the Queen's arms fold her.
Her step-mother Zoë doth love her so—'
'Hush !' cried a voice at his shoulder.

The Kings and Martyrs and Saints and Priests
All gather'd to guard the text :
There was Daniel snug in the lions' den
Singing no whit perplex'd—
Brazen Samson with spear and helm—
'The Queen,' wrote the Monk, 'rules firm this realm,
For the King gets older and older.
The Norseman Thorkill is brave and fair—'
'Hush !' cried a voice at his shoulder.

324.

The Blessed Damozel

THE blessèd damozel lean'd out
 From the gold bar of Heaven ;
 Her eyes were deeper than the depth
 Of waters still'd at even ;
 She had three lilies in her hand,
 And the stars in her hair were seven.

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,
 No wrought flowers did adorn,
 But a white rose of Mary's gift,
 For service meetly worn ;
 Her hair that lay along her back
 Was yellow like ripe corn.

Herseem'd she scarce had been a day
 One of God's choristers ;
 The wonder was not yet quite gone
 From that still look of hers ;
 Albeit, to them she left, her day
 Had counted as ten years.

(To one, it is ten years of years.
 . . . Yet now, and in this place,
 Surely she lean'd o'er me—her hair
 Fell all about my face. . . .
 Nothing : the autumn-fall of leaves.
 The whole year sets apace.)

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

It was the rampart of God's house
That she was standing on ;
By God built over the sheer depth
The which is Space begun ;
So high, that looking downward thence
She scarce could see the sun.

It lies in Heaven, across the flood
Of ether, as a bridge.
Beneath, the tides of day and night
With flame and darkness ridge
The void, as low as where this earth
Spins like a fretful midge.

Around her, lovers, newly met
'Mid deathless love's acclaims,
Spoke evermore among themselves
Their heart-remember'd names ;
And the souls mounting up to God
Went by her like thin flames.

And still she bow'd herself and stoop'd
Out of the circling charm ;
Until her bosom must have made
The bar she lean'd on warm,
And the lilies lay as if asleep
Along her bended arm.

From the fix'd place of Heaven she saw
Time like a pulse shake fierce
Through all the worlds. Her gaze still strove
Within the gulf to pierce
Its path ; and now she spoke as when
The stars sang in their spheres.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

The sun was gone now ; the curl'd moon
Was like a little feather
Fluttering far down the gulf ; and now
She spoke through the still weather.
Her voice was like the voice the stars
Had when they sang together.

(Ah sweet ! Even now, in that bird's song,
Strove not her accents there,
Fain to be hearkened ? When those bells
Possess'd the mid-day air,
Strove not her steps to reach my side
Down all the echoing stair ?)

' I wish that he were come to me :
For he will come,' she said.
' Have I not pray'd in Heaven ?—on earth,
Lord, Lord, has he not pray'd ?
Are not two prayers a perfect strength ?
And shall I feel afraid ?

' When round his head the aureole clings,
And he is clothed in white,
I'll take his hand and go with him
To the deep wells of light ;
As unto a stream we will step down,
And bathe there in God's sight.

' We two will stand beside that shrine,
Occult, withheld, untrod,
Whose lamps are stirred continually
With prayer sent up to God ;
And see our old prayers, granted, melt
Each like a little cloud.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

' We two will lie i' the shadow of
That living mystic tree,
Within whose secret growth the Dove
Is sometimes felt to be,
While every leaf that His plumes touch
Saith His Name audibly.

' And I myself will teach to him,
I myself, lying so,
The songs I sing here ; which his voice
Shall pause in, hush'd and slow,
And find some knowledge at each pause,
Or some new thing to know.'

(Alas ! We two, we two, thou say'st !
Yea, one wast thou with me
That once of old. But shall God lift
To endless unity
The soul whose likeness with thy soul
Was but its love for thee ?)

' We two,' she said, ' will seek the groves
Where the lady Mary is,
With her five handmaidens, whose names
Are five sweet symphonies,
Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,
Margaret and Rosalys.

' Circlewise sit they, with bound locks
And foreheads garlanded ;
Into the fine cloth white like flame
Weaving the golden thread,
To fashion the birth-ropes for them
Who are just born, being dead.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

' He shall fear, haply, and be dumb :
Then will I lay my cheek
To his, and tell about our love,
Not once abash'd or weak :
And the dear Mother will approve
My pride, and let me speak.

' Herself shall bring us, hand in hand,
To Him round whom all souls
Kneel, the clear-ranged unnumbered heads
Bowed with their aureoles :
And angels meeting us shall sing
To their citherns and citoles.

' There will I ask of Christ the Lord
Thus much for him and me :—
Only to live as once on earth
With Love,—only to be,
As then awhile, for ever now
Together, I and he.'

She gazed and listen'd and then said,
Less sad of speech than mild,—
' All this is when he comes.' She ceased.
The light thrill'd towards her, fill'd
With angels in strong level flight.
Her eyes prayed, and she smiled.

(I saw her smile.) But soon their path
Was vague in distant spheres :
And then she cast her arms along
The golden barriers,
And laid her face between her hands,
And wept. (I heard her tears.)

325.

Soul's Beauty

UNDER the arch of Life, where love and death,
 Terror and mystery, guard her shrine, I saw
 Beauty enthroned; and though her gaze struck awe,
 I drew it in as simply as my breath.
 Hers are the eyes which, over and beneath,
 The sky and sea bend on thee,—which can draw,
 By sea or sky or woman, to one law,
 The allotted bondman of her palm and wreath.

This is that Lady Beauty, in whose praise
 Thy voice and hand shake still,—long known to thee
 By flying hair and fluttering hem,—the beat
 Following her daily of thy heart and feet,
 How passionately and irretrievably,
 In what fond flight, how many ways and days!

326.

Love sight

WHEN do I see thee most, beloved one?
 When in the light the spirits of mine eyes
 Before thy face, their altar, solemnize
 The worship of that love thro' thee made known?
 Or when, in the dusk hours (we two alone),
 Close-kiss'd, and eloquent of still replies
 Thy twilight hidden glimmering visage lies,
 And my soul only sees thy soul its own?

O love, my love! if I no more should see
 Thyself, nor on the earth the shadow of thee,
 Nor image of thine eyes in any spring,—
 How then should sound upon Life's darkening slope
 The ground-whirl of the perish'd leaves of Hope,
 The wind of Death's imperishable wing?

I

EAT thou and drink ; to-morrow thou shalt die.
 Surely the earth, that 's wise being very old,
 Needs not our help. Then loose me, love, and hold
 Thy sultry hair up from my face ; that I
 May pour for thee this golden wine, brim-high,
 Till round the glass thy fingers glow like gold.
 We'll drown all hours : thy song, while hours are toll'd,
 Shall leap, as fountains veil the changing sky.

Now kiss, and think that there are really those,
 My own high-bosom'd beauty, who increase
 Vain gold, vain lore, and yet might choose our way !
 Through many years they toil ; then on a day
 They die not,—for their life was death,—but cease ;
 And round their narrow lips the mould falls close.

II

Watch thou and fear ; to-morrow thou shalt die.
 Or art thou sure thou shalt have time for death ?
 Is not the day which God's word promiseth
 To come man knows not when ? In yonder sky,
 Now while we speak, the sun speeds forth : can I
 Or thou assure him of his goal ? God's breath
 Even at this moment haply quickeneth
 The air to a flame ; till spirits, always nigh
 Though screened and hid, shall walk the daylight here.
 And dost thou prate of all that man shall do ?
 Canst thou, who hast but plagues, presume to be
 Glad in his gladness that comes after thee ?
 Will *his* strength slay *thy* worm in Hell ? Go to :
 Cover thy countenance, and watch, and fear !

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

III

Think thou and act ; to-morrow thou shalt die.
Outstretch'd in the sun's warmth upon the shore,
Thou say'st : ' Man's measured path is all gone o'er :
Up all his years, steeply, with strain and sigh,
Man clomb until he touch'd the truth ; and I,
Even I, am he whom it was destined for.'
How should this be ? Art thou then so much more
Than they who sow'd, that thou shouldst reap thereby ?

Nay, come up hither. From this wave-wash'd mound
Unto the furthest flood-brim look with me ;
Then reach on with thy thought till it be drown'd.
Miles and miles distant though the last line be,
And though thy soul sail leagues and leagues beyond,—
Still, leagues beyond those leagues, there is more sea.

GERALD MASSEY

1828-1907

328.

Young Love

ALL glorious as the Rainbow's birth
She came in Spring-tide's golden hours,
When Heaven went hand-in-hand with Earth,
And May was crown'd with buds and flowers.
The mounting devil at my heart
Clomb faintlier, as my life did win
The charmèd heaven she wrought apart
To wake its better Angel in.
With radiant mien she trod serene
And pass'd me smiling by—
O, who that look'd could help but love ?
Not I, sweet soul, not I !

GERALD MASSEY

Her budding breasts like fragrant fruit
Of love were ripening to be press'd :
Her voice that shook my heart's red root
Might not have broken a Babe's rest,—
More liquid than the running brooks,
More vernal than the voice of Spring,
When Nightingales are in their nooks,
And all the leafy thickets ring.
The love she coyly hid at heart
Was shyly conscious in her eye ;
O, who that look'd could help but love ?
Not I, sweet soul, not I !

GEORGE MEREDITH

1828-1909

329. *Love in the Valley*

UNDER yonder beech-tree single on the green-sward,
Couch'd with her arms behind her golden head,
Knees and tresses folded to slip and ripple idly,
Lies my young love sleeping in the shade.
Had I the heart to slide an arm beneath her,
Press her parting lips as her waist I gather slow,
Waking in amazement she could not but embrace me :
Then would she hold me and never let me go ?

Shy as the squirrel and wayward as the swallow,
Swift as the swallow along the river's light
Circling the surface to meet his mirror'd winglets,
Fleeter she seems in her stay than in her flight.
Shy as the squirrel that leaps among the pine-tops,
Wayward as the swallow overhead at set of sun,
She whom I love is hard to catch and conquer,
Hard, but O the glory of the winning were she won !

GEORGE MEREDITH

When her mother tends her before the laughing mirror,
Tying up her laces, looping up her hair,
Often she thinks, were this wild thing wedded,
More love should I have, and much less care.
When her mother tends her before the lighted mirror,
Loosening her laces, combing down her curls,
Often she thinks, were this wild thing wedded,
I should miss but one for many boys and girls.

Heartless she is as the shadow in the meadows
Flying to the hills on a blue and breezy noon.
No, she is athirst and drinking up her wonder :
Earth to her is young as the slip of the new moon.
Deals she an unkindness, 'tis but her rapid measure,
Even as in a dance ; and her smile can heal no less :
Like the swinging May-cloud that pelts the flowers with
hailstones
Off a sunny border, she was made to bruise and bless.

Lovely are the curves of the white owl sweeping
Wavy in the dusk lit by one large star.
Lone on the fir-branch, his rattle-note unvaried,
Brooding o'er the gloom, spins the brown evejar.
Darker grows the valley, more and more forgetting :
So were it with me if forgetting could be will'd.
Tell the grassy hollow that holds the bubbling well-spring,
Tell it to forget the source that keeps it fill'd.

Stepping down the hill with her fair companions,
Arm in arm, all against the raying West,
Boldly she sings, to the merry tune she marches,
Brave is her shape, and sweeter unpossess'd.

GEORGE MEREDITH

Sweeter, for she is what my heart first awaking
Whisper'd the world was ; morning light is she.
Love that so desires would fain keep her changeless ;
Fain would fling the net, and fain have her free.

Happy happy time, when the white star hovers
Low over dim fields fresh with bloomy dew,
Near the face of dawn, that draws athwart the darkness,
Threading it with colour, like yewberries the yew.
Thicker crowd the shades as the grave East deepens
Glowing, and with crimson a long cloud swells.
Maiden still the morn is ; and strange she is, and secret ;
Strange her eyes ; her cheeks are cold as cold sea-shells.

Sunrays, leaning on our southern hills and lighting
Wild cloud-mountains that drag the hills along,
Oft ends the day of your shifting brilliant laughter
Chill as a dull face frowning on a song.
Ay, but shows the South-west a ripple-feather'd bosom
Blown to silver while the clouds are shaken and ascend
Scaling the mid-heavens as they stream, there comes a
sunset
Rich, deep like love in beauty without end.

When at dawn she sighs, and like an infant to the window
Turns grave eyes craving light, released from dreams,
Beautiful she looks, like a white water-lily
Bursting out of bud in havens of the streams.
When from bed she rises clothed from neck to ankle
In her long nightgown sweet as boughs of May,
Beautiful she looks, like a tall garden-lily
Pure from the night, and splendid for the day.

GEORGE MEREDITH

Mother of the dews, dark eye-lash'd twilight,
Low-lidded twilight, o'er the valley's brim,
Rounding on thy breast sings the dew-delighted skylark,
Clear as though the dewdrops had their voice in him.
Hidden where the rose-flush drinks the rayless planet,
Fountain-full he pours the spraying fountain-showers.
Let me hear her laughter, I would have her ever
Cool as dew in twilight, the lark above the flowers.

. . .

All the girls are out with their baskets for the primrose ;
Up lanes, woods through, they troop in joyful bands.
My sweet leads : she knows not why, but now she loiters,
Eyes the bent anemones, and hangs her hands.
Such a look will tell that the violets are peeping,
Coming the rose : and unaware a cry
Springs in her bosom for odours and for colour,
Covert and the nightingale ; she knows not why.

. . .

Kerchief'd head and chin she darts between her tulips,
Streaming like a willow gray in arrowy rain :
Some bend beaten cheek to gravel, and their angel
She will be ; she lifts them, and on she speeds again.
Black the driving raincloud breasts the iron gateway :
She is forth to cheer a neighbour lacking mirth.
So when sky and grass met rolling dumb for thunder
Saw I once a white dove, sole light of earth.

. . .

Prim little scholars are the flowers of her garden,
Train'd to stand in rows, and asking if they please.
I might love them well but for loving more the wild ones :
O my wild ones ! they tell me more than these.

GEORGE MEREDITH

You, my wild one, you tell of honied field-rose,
Violet, blushing eglantine in life ; and even as they,
They by the wayside are earnest of your goodness,
You are of life's, on the banks that line the way.

Peering at her chamber the white crowns the red rose,
Jasmine winds the porch with stars two and three.
Parted is the window ; she sleeps ; the starry jasmine
Breathes a falling breath that carries thoughts of me.
Sweeter unpossess'd, have I said of her my sweetest ?
Not while she sleeps : while she sleeps the jasmine
breathes,
Luring her to love ; she sleeps ; the starry jasmine
Bears me to her pillow under white rose-wreaths.

Yellow with birdfoot-trefoil are the grass-glades ;
Yellow with cinquefoil of the dew-gray leaf ;
Yellow with stoncrop ; the moss-mounds are yellow ;
Blue-neck'd the wheat sways, yellowing to the sheaf.
Green-yellow, bursts from the copse the laughing yaffle ;
Sharp as a sickle is the edge of shade and shine :
Earth in her heart laughs looking at the heavens,
Thinking of the harvest : I look and think of mine.

This I may know : her dressing and undressing
Such a change of light shows as when the skies in sport
Shift from cloud to moonlight ; or edging over thunder
Slips a ray of sun ; or sweeping into port
White sails furl ; or on the ocean borders
White sails lean along the waves leaping green.
Visions of her shower before me, but from eyesight
Guarded she would be like the sun were she seen.

GEORGE MEREDITH

Front door and back of the moss'd old farmhouse
Open with the morn, and in a breezy link
Freshly sparkles garden to stripe-shadow'd orchard,
Green across a rill where on sand the minnows wink.
Busy in the grass the early sun of summer
Swarms, and the blackbird's mellow fluting notes
Call my darling up with round and roguish challenge :
Quaintest, richest carol of all the singing throats !

Cool was the woodside ; cool as her white dairy
Keeping sweet the cream-pan ; and there the boys
from school,
Cricketing below, rush'd brown and red with sunshine ;
O the dark translucence of the deep-eyed cool !
Spying from the farm, herself she fetch'd a pitcher
Full of milk, and tilted for each in turn the beak.
Then a little fellow, mouth up and on tiptoe,
Said, ' I will kiss you ' : she laugh'd and lean'd her
cheek.

Doves of the fir-wood walling high our red roof
Through the long noon coo, crooning through the coo.
Loose droop the leaves, and down the sleepy roadway
Sometimes pipes a chaffinch ; loose droops the blue.
Cows flap a slow tail knee-deep in the river,
Breathless, given up to sun and gnat and fly.
Nowhere is she seen ; and if I see her nowhere,
Lightning may come, straight rains and tiger sky.

O the golden sheaf, the rustling treasure-armful !
O the nutbrown tresses nodding interlaced !
O the treasure-tresses one another over
Nodding ! O the girdle slack about the waist !

GEORGE MEREDITH

Slain are the poppies that shot their random scarlet
Quick amid the wheat-ears : wound about the waist,
Gather'd, see these brides of Earth one blush of ripeness !
O the nutbrown tresses nodding interlaced !

Large and smoky red the sun's cold disk drops,
Clipp'd by naked hills, on violet shaded snow :
Eastward large and still lights up a bower of moonrise,
Whence at her leisure steps the moon aglow.
Nightlong on black print-branches our beech-tree
Gazes in this whiteness : nightlong could I.
Here may life on death or death on life be painted.
Let me clasp her soul to know she cannot die !

Gossips count her faults ; they scour a narrow chamber
Where there is no window, read not heaven or her.
' When she was a tiny,' one agèd woman quavers,
Plucks at my heart and leads me by the ear.
Faults she had once as she learn'd to run and tumbled :
Faults of feature some see, beauty not complete.
Yet, good gossips, beauty that makes holy
Earth and air, may have faults from head to feet.

Hither she comes ; she comes to me ; she lingers,
Deepens her brown eyebrows, while in new surprise
High rise the lashes in wonder of a stranger ;
Yet am I the light and living of her eyes.
Something friends have told her fills her heart to brim-
ming,
Nets her in her blushes, and wounds her, and tames.—
Sure of her haven, O like a dove alighting,
Arms up, she dropp'd : our souls were in our names.

GEORGE MEREDITH

Soon will she lie like a white frost sunrise.

Yellow oats and brown wheat, barley pale as rye,
Long since your sheaves have yielded to the thresher,
Felt the girdle loosen'd, seen the tresses fly.

Soon will she lie like a blood-red sunset.

Swift with the to-morrow, green-wing'd Spring !
Sing from the South-west, bring her back the truants,
Nightingale and swallow, song and dipping wing.

Soft new beech-leaves, up to beamy April

Spreading bough on bough a primrose mountain, you
Lucid in the moon, raise lilies to the skyfields,

Youngest green transfused in silver shining through :
Fairer than the lily, than the wild white cherry :

Fair as in image my seraph love appears
Borne to me by dreams when dawn is at my eyelids :
Fair as in the flesh she swims to me on tears.

Could I find a place to be alone with heaven,

I would speak my heart out : heaven is my need.
Every woodland tree is flushing like the dogwood,
Flashing like the whitebeam, swaying like the reed.
Flushing like the dogwood crimson in October ;
Streaming like the flag-reed South-west blown ;
Flashing as in gusts the sudden-lighted whitebeam :
All seem to know what is for heaven alone.

330. *Phoebus with Admetus*

WHEN by Zeus relenting the mandate was revoked,
Sentencing to exile the bright Sun-God,
Mindful were the ploughmen of who the steer had yoked,
Who : and what a track show'd the upturn'd sod !

GEORGE MEREDITH

Mindful were the shepherds, as now the noon severe
Bent a burning eyebrow to brown evetide,
How the rustic flute drew the silver to the sphere,
Sister of his own, till her rays fell wide.

God ! of whom music
And song and blood are pure,
The day is never darken'd
That had thee here obscure.

Chirping none, the scarlet cicadas crouch'd in ranks :
Slack the thistle-head piled its down-silk gray :
Scarce the stony lizard suck'd hollows in his flanks :
Thick on spots of umbrage our drowsed flocks lay.
Sudden bow'd the chestnuts beneath a wind unheard,
Lengthen'd ran the grasses, the sky grew slate :
Then amid a swift flight of wing'd seed white as curd,
Clear of limb a Youth smote the master's gate.

God ! of whom music
And song and blood are pure,
The day is never darken'd
That had thee here obscure.

Water, first of singers, o'er rocky mount and mead,
First of earthly singers, the sun-loved rill,
Sang of him, and flooded the ripples on the reed,
Seeking whom to waken and what ear fill.
Water, sweetest soother to kiss a wound and cool,
Sweetest and divinest, the sky-born brook,
Chuckled, with a whimper, and made a mirror-pool
Round the guest we welcomed, the strange hand shook.

God ! of whom music
And song and blood are pure,
The day is never darken'd
That had thee here obscure.

GEORGE MEREDITH

Many swarms of wild bees descended on our fields :
Stately stood the wheatstalk with head bent high :
Big of heart we labour'd at storing mighty yields,
Wool and corn, and clusters to make men cry !
Hand-like rush'd the vintage ; we strung the bellied skins
Plump, and at the sealing the Youth's voice rose :
Maidens clung in circle, on little fists their chins ;
Gentle beasties through push'd a cold long nose.
God ! of whom music
And song and blood are pure,
The day is never darken'd
That had thee here obscure.

Foot to fire in snowtime we trimm'd the slender shaft :
Often down the pit spied the lean wolf's teeth
Grin against his will, trapp'd by masterstrokes of craft ;
Helpless in his froth-wrath as green logs seethe !
Safe the tender lambs tugg'd the teats, and winter sped
Whirl'd before the crocus, the year's new gold.
Hung the hooky beak up aloft, the arrowhead
Redden'd through his feathers for our dear fold.
God ! of whom music
And song and blood are pure,
The day is never darken'd
That had thee here obscure.

Tales we drank of giants at war with gods above :
Rocks were they to look on, and earth climb'd air !
Tales of search for simples, and those who sought of love
Ease because the creature was all too fair.
Pleasant ran our thinking that while our work was good,
Sure as fruits for sweat would the praise come fast.

GEORGE MEREDITH

He that wrestled stoutest and tamed the billow-brood
Danced in rings with girls, like a sail-flapp'd mast.

God ! of whom music
And song and blood are pure,
The day is never darken'd
That had thee here obscure.

Lo, the herb of healing, when once the herb is known,
Shines in shady woods bright as new-sprung flame,
Ere the string was tighten'd we heard the mellow tone,
After he had taught how the sweet sounds came.
Stretch'd about his feet, labour done, 'twas as you see
Red pomegranates tumble and burst hard rind.
So began contention to give delight and be
Excellent in things aim'd to make life kind.

God ! of whom music
And song and blood are pure,
The day is never darken'd
That had thee here obscure.

You with shelly horns, rams ! and, promontory goats,
You whose browsing beards dip in coldest dew !
Bulls, that walk the pastures in kingly-flashing coats !
Laurel, ivy, vine, wreathed for feasts not few !
You that build the shade-roof, and you that court the rays,
You that leap besprinkling the rock stream-rent :
He has been our fellow, the morning of our days ;
Us he chose for housemates, and this way went.

God ! of whom music
And song and blood are pure,
The day is never darken'd
That had thee here obscure.

331.

Melampus

WITH love exceeding a simple love of the things
 That glide in grasses and rubble of woody wreck ;
 Or change their perch on a beat of quivering wings
 From branch to branch, only restful to pipe and peck ;
 Or, bristled, curl at a touch their snouts in a ball ;
 Or cast their web between bramble and thorny hook ;
 The good physician Melampus, loving them all,
 Among them walk'd, as a scholar who reads a book.

For him the woods were a home and gave him the key
 Of knowledge, thirst for their treasures in herbs and
 flowers.

The secrets held by the creatures nearer than we
 To earth he sought, and the link of their life with ours :
 And where alike we are, unlike where, and the vein'd
 Division, vein'd parallel, of a blood that flows
 In them, in us, from the source by man unattain'd
 Save marks he well what the mystical woods disclose.

And this he deem'd might be boon of love to a breast
 Embracing tenderly each little motive shape,
 The prone, the flitting, who seek their food whither best
 Their wits direct, whither best from their foes escape :
 For closer drawn to our mother's natural milk,
 As babes they learn where her motherly help is great :
 They know the juice for the honey, juice for the silk,
 And, need they medical antidotes, find them straight.

GEORGE MEREDITH

Of earth and sun they are wise, they nourish their broods,
Weave, build, hive, burrow and battle, take joy and pain
Like swimmers varying billows : never in woods
Runs white insanity fleeing itself : all sane
The woods revolve : as the tree its shadowing limbs
To some resemblance in motion, the rooted life
Restrains disorder : you hear the primitive hymns
Of earth in woods issue wild of the web of strife.

Now sleeping once on a day of marvellous fire
A brood of snakes he had cherish'd in grave regret
That death his people had dealt their dam and their sire,
Through savage dread of them, crept to his neck, and
set
Their tongues to lick him : the swift affectionate tongue
Of each ran licking the slumberer : then his ears
A fork'd red tongue tickled shrewdly : sudden upsprung,
He heard a voice piping : Aye, for he has no fears !

A bird said that, in the notes of birds, and the speech
Of men, it seem'd : and another renew'd : He moves
To learn and not to pursue, he gathers to teach ;
He feeds his young as do we, and as we love loves.
No fears have I of a man who goes with his head
To earth, chance looking aloft at us, kind of hand :
I feel to him as to earth of whom we are fed ;
I pipe him much for his good could he understand.

Melampus touch'd at his ears, laid finger on wrist :
He was not dreaming, he sensibly felt and heard.
Above, through leaves, where the tree-twigs thick inter-
twist,
He spied the birds and the bill of the speaking bird.

GEORGE MEREDITH

His cushion mosses in shades of various green,
The lump'd, the antler'd, he press'd, while the sunny
snake

Slipp'd under : draughts he had drunk of clear Hippo-
crene,

It seem'd, and sat with a gift of the Gods awake.

Divinely thrill'd was the man, exultingly full,

As quick well-waters that come of the heart of earth,
Ere yet they dart in a brook are one bubble-pool

To light and sound, wedding both at the leap of birth.
The soul of light vivid shone, a stream within stream ;

The soul of sound from a musical shell outflew ;
Where others hear but a hum and see but a beam,

The tongue and eye of the fountain of life he knew.

He knew the Hours : they were round him, laden with
seed

Of hours bestrewn upon vapour, and one by one
They wing'd as ripen'd in fruit the burden decreed

For each to scatter ; they flush'd like the buds in sun,
Bequeathing seed to successive similar rings,

Their sisters, bearers to men of what men have earn'd :
He knew them, talk'd with the yet unredde'd ; the
stings,

The sweets, they warm'd at their bosoms divined,
discern'd.

Not unsolicited, sought by diligent feet,

By riddling fingers expanded, oft watch'd in growth
With brooding deep as the noon-ray's quickening wheat,

Ere touch'd, the pendulous flower of the plants of sloth,
The plants of rigidness, answer'd question and squeeze,

Revealing wherefore it bloom'd uninviting, bent,
Yet making harmony breathe of life and disease,

The deeper chord of a wonderful instrument.

GEORGE MEREDITH

So pass'd he luminous-eyed for earth and the fates
We arm to bruise or caress us ; his ears were charged
With tones of love in a whirl of voluble hates,
With music wrought of distraction his heart enlarged.
Celestial-shining, though mortal, singer, though mute,
He drew the Master of harmonies, voiced or still'd,
To seek him ; heard at the silent medicine-root
A song, beheld in fulfilment the unfulfill'd.

Him Phoebus, lending to darkness colour and form
Of light's excess, many lessons and counsels gave ;
Show'd Wisdom lord of the human intricate swarm,
And whence prophetic it looks on the hives that
rave,
And how acquired, of the zeal of love to acquire,
And where it stands, in the centre of life a sphere ;
And Measure, mood of the lyre, the rapturous lyre,
He said was Wisdom, and struck him the notes to
hear.

Sweet, sweet : 't was glory of vision, honey, the breeze
In heat, the run of the river on root and stone,
All senses joined, as the sister Pierides
Are one, uplifting their chorus, the Nine, his own.
In stately order, evolved of sound into sight,
From sight to sound intershifting, the man descried
The growths of earth, his adored, like day out of night,
Ascend in song, seeing nature and song allied.

And there vitality, there, there solely in song,
Resides, where earth and her uses to men, their needs,
Their forceful cravings, the theme are : there is it
strong,
The Master said : and the studious eye that reads,

GEORGE MEREDITH

(Yea, even as earth to the crown of Gods on the mount),
In links divine with the lyrical tongue is bound.
Pursue thy craft : it is music drawn of a fount
To spring perennial ; well-spring is common ground.

Melampus dwelt among men : physician and sage,
He served them, loving them, healing them ; sick or
maim'd

Or them that frenzied in some delirious rage
Outran the measure, his juice of the woods reclaim'd.
He play'd on men, as his master, Phoebus, on strings
Melodious : as the God did he drive and check,
Through love exceeding a simple love of the things
That glide in grasses and rubble of woody wreck.

332.

Lucifer in Starlight

ON a starr'd night Prince Lucifer uprose.
Tired of his dark dominion swung the fiend
Above the rolling ball in cloud part screen'd,
Where sinners hugg'd their sceptre of repose.
Poor prey to his hot fit of pride were those.
And now upon his western wing he lean'd,
Now his huge bulk o'er Afric's sands careen'd,
Now the black planet shadow'd Arctic snows.
Soaring through wider zones that prick'd his scars
With memory of the old revolt from Awe,
He reach'd a middle height, and at the stars,
Which are the brain of heaven, he look'd, and sank
Around the ancient track march'd, rank on rank,
The army of unalterable law.

333.

Dirge in Woods

A WIND sways the pines,
 And below
 Not a breath of wild air ;
 Still as the mosses that glow
 On the flooring and over the lines
 Of the roots here and there.
 The pine-tree drops its dead ;
 They are quiet, as under the sea.
 Overhead, overhead
 Rushes life in a race,
 As the clouds the clouds chase ;
 And we go,
 And we drop like the fruits of the tree,
 Even we,
 Even so.

ALEXANDER SMITH

1829-1867

334.

Scorned

THE callow young were huddling in the nests,
 The marigold was burning in the marsh
 Like a thing dipt in sunset, when he came.

My blood went up to meet him on my face,
 Glad as a child that hears its father's step
 And runs to meet him at the open porch.

I gave him all my being, like a flower
 That flings its perfume on a vagrant breeze—
 A breeze that wanders on and heeds it not.

ALEXANDER SMITH

His scorn is lying on my heart like snow,
My eyes are weary, and I fain would sleep :
The quietest sleep is underneath the ground.

Are ye around me, friends ? I cannot see,
I cannot hear the voices that I love,
I lift my hands to you from out the night !

Methought I felt a tear upon my cheek.—
Weep not, my mother ! It is time to rest,
And I am very weary ; so, good-night !

335.

Barbara

ON the Sabbath-day,
Through the churchyard old and gray,
Over the crisp and yellow leaves I held my rustling way ;
And amid the words of mercy, falling on my soul like
balms,
'Mid the gorgeous storms of music—in the mellow organ-
calms,
'Mid the upward-streaming prayers, and the rich and
solemn psalms,
I stood careless, Barbara.

My heart was elsewhere,
While the organ shook the air,
And the priest, with outspread hands, bless'd the people
with a prayer ;
But when rising to go homeward, with a mild and saint-
like shine

ALEXANDER SMITH

Gleam'd a face of airy beauty with its heavenly eyes on
mine—

Gleam'd and vanish'd in a moment—O that face was
surely thine

Out of heaven, Barbara!

O pallid, pallid face!

O earnest eyes of grace!

When last I saw thee, dearest, it was in another place.

You came running forth to meet me with my love-gift
on your wrist:

The flutter of a long white dress, then all was lost in
mist—

A purple stain of agony was on the mouth I kiss'd,

That wild morning, Barbara.

I search'd, in my despair,

Sunny noon and midnight air;

I could not drive away the thought that you were lingering
there.

O many and many a winter night I sat when you were
gone,

My worn face buried in my hands, beside the fire alone—

Within the dripping churchyard, the rain plashing on
your stone,

You were sleeping, Barbara.

'Mong angels, do you think

Of the precious golden link

I clasp'd around your happy arm while sitting by yon
brink?

Or when that night of gliding dance, of laughter and
guitars,

ALEXANDER SMITH

Was emptied of its music, and we watch'd through lattice-
bars

The silent midnight heaven moving o'er us with its stars,
Till the day broke, Barbara ?

In the years I've changed ;
Wild and far my heart has ranged,
And many sins and errors now have been on me avenged ;
But to you I have been faithful whatsoever good I lack'd :
I loved you, and above my life still hangs that love intact—
Your love the trembling rainbow, I the reckless cataract.
Still I love you, Barbara.

Yet, Love, I am unblest ;
With many doubts opprest,
I wander like the desert wind without a place of rest.
Could I but win you for an hour from off that starry
shore,
The hunger of my soul were still'd ; for Death hath told
you more
Than the melancholy world doth know—things deeper
than all lore
You could teach me, Barbara.

In vain, in vain, in vain !
You will never come again.
There droops upon the dreary hills a mournful fringe of
rain ;
The gloaming closes slowly round, loud winds are in the
tree,
Round selfish shores for ever moans the hurt and wounded
sea ;
There is no rest upon the earth, peace is with Death and
thee—
Barbara !

HENRY KINGSLEY

1830-1876

336.

Magdalen

MAGDALEN at Michael's gate
Tirlèd at the pin ;
On Joseph's thorn sang the blackbird,
' Let her in ! Let her in ! '

' Hast thou seen the wounds ? ' said Michael,
' Know'st thou thy sin ? '

' It is evening, evening, ' sang the blackbird,
' Let her in ! Let her in ! '

' Yes, I have seen the wounds,
And I know my sin. '

' She knows it well, well, well, ' sung the blackbird,
' Let her in ! Let her in ! '

' Thou bringest no offerings, ' said Michael.
' Nought save sin. '

And the blackbird sang, ' She is sorry, sorry, sorry,
' Let her in ! Let her in ! '

When he had sung himself to sleep,
And night did begin,
One came and open'd Michael's gate,
And Magdalen went in.

EMILY DICKINSON

1830-1886

337.

Parting

MY life closed twice before its close ;
It yet remains to see
If Immortality unveil
A third event to me

So huge, so hopeless to conceive,
As these that twice befell.
Parting is all we know of heaven,
And all we need of hell.

CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI

1830-1894

338.

Bride Song

FROM 'THE PRINCE'S PROGRESS'

TOO late for love, too late for joy,
Too late, too late !
You loiter'd on the road too long,
You trifled at the gate :
The enchanted dove upon her branch
Died without a mate ;
The enchanted princess in her tower
Slept, died, behind the grate ;
Her heart was starving all this while
You made it wait.

CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI

Ten years ago, five years ago,
One year ago,
Even then you had arrived in time,
Though somewhat slow ;
Then you had known her living face
Which now you cannot know :
The frozen fountain would have leap'd,
The buds gone on to blow,
The warm south wind would have awaked
To melt the snow.

Is she fair now as she lies ?
Once she was fair ;
Meet queen for any kingly king,
With gold-dust on her hair.
Now there are poppies in her locks,
White poppies she must wear ;
Must wear a veil to shroud her face
And the want graven there :
Or is the hunger fed at length,
Cast off the care ?

We never saw her with a smile
Or with a frown ;
Her bed seem'd never soft to her,
Though toss'd of down ;
She little heeded what she wore,
Kirtle, or wreath, or gown ;
We think her white brows often ached
Beneath her crown,
Till silvery hairs show'd in her locks
That used to be so brown.

CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI

We never heard her speak in haste :
Her tones were sweet,
And modulated just so much
As it was meet :
Her heart sat silent through the noise
And concourse of the street.
There was no hurry in her hands,
No hurry in her feet ;
There was no bliss drew nigh to her,
That she might run to greet.

You should have wept her yesterday,
Wasting upon her bed :
But wherefore should you weep to-day
That she is dead ?
Lo, we who love weep not to-day,
But crown her royal head.
Let be these poppies that we strew,
Your roses are too red :
Let be these poppies, not for you
Cut down and spread.

339.

A Birthday

MY heart is like a singing bird
Whose nest is in a water'd shoot ;
My heart is like an apple-tree
Whose boughs are bent with thick-set fruit ;
My heart is like a rainbow shell
That paddles in a halcyon sea ;
My heart is gladder than all these,
Because my love is come to me.

CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI

Raise me a daïs of silk and down ;
Hang it with vair and purple dyes ;
Carve it in doves and pomegranates,
And peacocks with a hundred eyes ;
Work it in gold and silver grapes,
In leaves and silver fleurs-de-lys ;
Because the birthday of my life
Is come, my love is come to me.

340.

Song

WHEN I am dead, my dearest,
Sing no sad songs for me ;
Plant thou no roses at my head,
Nor shady cypress tree :
Be the green grass above me
With showers and dewdrops wet ;
And if thou wilt, remember,
And if thou wilt, forget.

I shall not see the shadows,
I shall not feel the rain ;
I shall not hear the nightingale
Sing on, as if in pain ;
And dreaming through the twilight
That doth not rise nor set,
Haply I may remember,
And haply may forget.

341.

Twice

I TOOK my heart in my hand
 (O my love, O my love),
 I said : Let me fall or stand,
 Let me live or die,
 But this once hear me speak
 (O my love, O my love)—
 Yet a woman's words are weak ;
 You should speak, not I.

You took my heart in your hand
 With a friendly smile,
 With a critical eye you scann'd,
 Then set it down,
 And said, ' It is still unripe,
 Better wait awhile ;
 Wait while the skylarks pipe,
 Till the corn grows brown.'

As you set it down it broke—
 Broke, but I did not wince ;
 I smiled at the speech you spoke,
 At your judgement I heard :
 But I have not often smiled
 Since then, nor question'd since,
 Nor cared for cornflowers wild,
 Nor sung with the singing bird.

I take my heart in my hand,
 O my God, O my God,

CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI

My broken heart in my hand :
Thou hast seen, judge Thou.
My hope was written on sand,
O my God, O my God :
Now let Thy judgement stand—
Yea, judge me now.

This, contemn'd of a man,
This, marr'd one heedless day,
This heart take Thou to scan
Both within and without :
Refine with fire its gold,
Purge Thou its dross away—
Yea, hold it in Thy hold,
Whence none can pluck it out.

I take my heart in my hand—
I shall not die, but live—
Before Thy face I stand ;
I, for Thou callest such :
All that I have I bring,
All that I am I give,
Smile Thou and I shall sing,
But shall not question much.

342.

Italia, Io Ti Saluto!

TO come back from the sweet South, to the North
Where I was born, bred, look to die ;
Come back to do my day's work in its day,
Play out my play—
Amen, amen, say I.

CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI

To see no more the country half my own,
Nor hear the half familiar speech,
Amen, I say ; I turn to that bleak North
Whence I came forth—
The South lies out of reach.

But when our swallows fly back to the South,
To the sweet South, to the sweet South,
The tears may come again into my eyes
On the old wise,
And the sweet name to my mouth.

343.

Uphill

DOES the road wind uphill all the way ?
Yes, to the very end.
Will the day's-journey take the whole long day ?
From morn to night, my friend.

But is there for the night a resting-place ?
A roof for when the slow, dark hours begin.
May not the darkness hide it from my face ?
You cannot miss that inn.

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night ?
Those who have gone before.
Then must I knock, or call when just in sight ?
They will not keep you waiting at that door.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak ?
Of labour you shall find the sum.
Will there be beds for me and all who seek ?
Yea, beds for all who come.

344.

Remember

REMEMBER me when I am gone away,
 Gone far away into the silent land ;
 When you can no more hold me by the hand,
 Nor I half turn to go, yet turning stay.
 Remember me when no more day by day
 You tell me of our future that you plann'd :
 Only remember me ; you understand
 It will be late to counsel then or pray.
 Yet if you should forget me for a while
 And afterwards remember, do not grieve :
 For if the darkness and corruption leave
 A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
 Better by far you should forget and smile
 Than that you should remember and be sad.

345.

Aloof

THE irresponsive silence of the land,
 The irresponsive sounding of the sea,
 Speak both one message of one sense to me :—
 Aloof, aloof, we stand aloof, so stand
 Thou too aloof, bound with the flawless band
 Of inner solitude ; we bind not thee ;
 But who from thy self-chain shall set thee free ?
 What heart shall touch thy heart ? What hand thy hand ?
 And I am sometimes proud and sometimes meek,
 And sometimes I remember days of old
 When fellowship seem'd not so far to seek,
 And all the world and I seem'd much less cold,
 And at the rainbow's foot lay surely gold,
 And hope felt strong, and life itself not weak.

346.

Rest

O EARTH, lie heavily upon her eyes ;
 Seal her sweet eyes weary of watching, Earth ;
 Lie close around her ; leave no room for mirth
 With its harsh laughter, nor for sound of sighs.
 She hath no questions, she hath no replies,
 Hush'd in and curtain'd with a blessèd dearth
 Of all that irk'd her from the hour of birth ;
 With stillness that is almost Paradise.
 Darkness more clear than noonday holdeth her,
 Silence more musical than any song ;
 Even her very heart has ceased to stir :
 Until the morning of Eternity
 Her rest shall not begin nor end, but be ;
 And when she wakes she will not think it long.

347.

Bride Song

WHO is this that cometh up not alone
 From the fiery-flying-serpent wilderness,
 Leaning upon her own Beloved One :
 Who is this ?

Lo, the King of kings' daughter, a high princess,
 Going home as bride to her Husband's Throne,
 Virgin queen in perfected loveliness.

Her eyes a dove's eyes and her voice a dove's moan,
 She shows like a full moon for heavenliness :
 Eager saints and angels ask in Heaven's zone,
 Who is this ?

348.

A Prayer

CLOTHER of the lily, Feeder of the sparrow,
 Father of the fatherless, dear Lord,
 Tho' Thou set me as a mark against Thine arrow,
 As a prey unto Thy sword,
 As a plough'd-up field beneath Thy harrow,
 As a captive in Thy cord,
 Let that cord be love ; and some day make my narrow
 Hallow'd bed according to Thy Word. Amen.

349.

Passing Away

PASSING away, saith the World, passing away :
 Chances, beauty and youth sapp'd day by day :
 Thy life never continueth in one stay.
 Is the eye waxen dim, is the dark hair changing to gray
 That hath won neither laurel nor bay ?
 I shall clothe myself in Spring and bud in May :
 Thou, root-stricken, shalt not rebuild thy decay
 On my bosom for aye.
 Then I answer'd : Yea.

Passing away, saith my Soul, passing away :
 With its burden of fear and hope, of labour and play,
 Harken what the past doth witness and say :
 Rust in thy gold, a moth is in thine array,
 A canker is in thy bud, thy leaf must decay.
 At midnight, at cockcrow, at morning, one certain day,
 Lo, the Bridegroom shall come and shall not delay :
 Watch thou and pray.
 Then I answer'd : Yea.

Passing away, saith my God, passing away :
 Winter passeth after the long delay :
 New grapes on the vine, new figs on the tender spray,
 Turtle calleth turtle in Heaven's May.
 Though I tarry, wait for me, trust me, watch and pray.
 Arise, come away ; night is past, and lo, it is day ;
 My love, my sister, my spouse, thou shalt hear me say—
 Then I answer'd : Yea.

350.

Marvel of Marvels

MARVEL of marvels, if I myself shall behold
 With mine own eyes my King in his city of gold ;
 Where the least of lambs is spotless white in the fold,
 Where the least and last of saints in spotless white is stoled,
 Where the dimmest head beyond a moon is aureoled.
 O saints, my belovèd, now mouldering to mould in the
 mould,
 Shall I see you lift your heads, see your cerements
 unroll'd,
 See with these very eyes ? who now in darkness and cold
 Tremble for the midnight cry, the rapture, the tale
 untold,—
The Bridegroom cometh, cometh, his Bride to enfold !

Cold it is, my belovèd, since your funeral bell was toll'd :
 Cold it is, O my King, how cold alone on the wold !

351.

Wisdom

WISEST of sparrows that sparrow which sitteth alone
Perch'd on the housetop, its own upper chamber,
for nest ;

Wisest of swallows that swallow which timely has flown
Over the turbulent sea to the land of its rest :

Wisest of sparrows and swallows, if I were as wise !

Wisest of spirits that spirit which dwelleth apart
Hid in the Presence of God for a chapel and nest,
Sending a wish and a will and a passionate heart
Over the eddy of life to that Presence in rest :
Seated alone and in peace till God bids it arise.

352.

Last Prayer

BEFORE the beginning Thou hast foreknown the end,
Before the birthday the death-bed was seen of Thee :
Cleanse what I cannot cleanse, mend what I cannot mend,
O Lord All-Merciful, be merciful to me.

While the end is drawing near I know not mine end ;
Birth I recall not, my death I cannot foresee :
O God, arise to defend, arise to befriend,
O Lord All-Merciful, be merciful to me.

353. *The High Tide on the Coast of*
Lincolnshire, 1571

THE old mayor climb'd the belfry tower,
 The ringers ran by two, by three ;
 ' Pull, if ye never pull'd before ;
 Good ringers, pull your best,' quoth he.
 ' Play uppe, play uppe, O Boston bells !
 Ply all your changes, all your swells,
 Play uppe " The Brides of Enderby ".'

Men say it was a stolen tyde—
 The Lord that sent it, He knows all ;
 But in myne ears doth still abide
 The message that the bells let fall :
 And there was naught of strange, beside
 The flights of mews and peewits pied
 By millions crouch'd on the old sea wall.

I sat and spun within the doore,
 My thread brake off, I raised myne eyes ;
 The level sun, like ruddy ore,
 Lay sinking in the barren skies,
 And dark against day's golden death
 She moved where Lindis wandereth,
 My sonne's fair wife, Elizabeth.

JEAN INGELow

'Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!' calling,
Ere the early dews were falling,
Farre away I heard her song.
'Cusha! Cusha!' all along
Where the reedy Lindis floweth,
 Floweth, floweth;
From the meads where melick groweth
Faintly came her milking song—

'Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!' calling,
'For the dews will soone be falling;
Leave your meadow grasses mellow,
 Mellow, mellow;
Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow;
Come uppe Whitefoot, come uppe Lightfoot,
Quit the stalks of parsley hollow,
 Hollow, hollow;
Come uppe Jetty, rise and follow,
From the clovers lift your head;
Come uppe Whitefoot, come uppe Lightfoot,
Come uppe Jetty, rise and follow,
Jetty, to the milking shed.'

If it be long, ay, long ago,
 When I beginne to think howe long,
Againe I hear the Lindis flow,
 Swift as an arrowe, sharp and strong;
And all the aire, it seemeth mee,
Bin full of floating bells (sayth shee),
That ring the tune of Enderby.

Alle fresh the level pasture lay,
 And not a shadowe mote be seene,
Save where full fyve good miles away
 The steeple tower'd from out the greene;

JEAN INGELow

And lo! the great bell farre and wide
Was heard in all the country side
That Saturday at eventide.

The swanherds where their sedges are
Moved on in sunset's golden breath,
The shepherde lads I heard afarre,
And my sonne's wife, Elizabeth ;
Till floating o'er the grassy sea
Came downe that kyndly message free,
The ' Brides of Mavis Enderby '.

Then some look'd uppe into the sky,
And all along where Lindis flows
To where the goodly vessels lie,
And where the lordly steeple shows.
They sayde, ' And why should this thing be ?
What danger lowers by land or sea ?
They ring the tune of Enderby !

' For evil news from Mablethorpe,
Of pyrate galleys warping down ;
For shippes ashore beyond the scorpe,
They have not spared to wake the towne ;
But while the west bin red to see,
And storms be none, and pyrates flee,
Why ring " The Brides of Enderby " ? '

I look'd without, and lo ! my sonne
Came riding downe with might and main :
He raised a shout as he drew on,
Till all the welkin rang again,
' Elizabeth ! Elizabeth ! '
(A sweeter woman ne'er drew breath
Than my sonne's wife, Elizabeth.)

JEAN INGELow

'The olde sea wall (he cried) is downe,
The rising tide comes on apace,
And boats adrift in yonder towne
Go sailing uppe the market-place.'
He shook as one that looks on death :
God save you, mother ! ' straight he saith ;
'Where is my wife, Elizabeth ?'

'Good sonne, where Lindis winds away,
With her two bairns I mark'd her long ;
And ere yon bells beganne to play
Afar I heard her milking song.'
He looked across the grassy lea,
To right, to left, 'Ho Enderby !'
They rang 'The Brides of Enderby !'

With that he cried and beat his breast ;
For, lo ! along the river's bed
A mighty eygre reared his crest,
And uppe the Lindis raging sped.
It swept with thunderous noises loud ;
Shaped like a curling snow-white cloud,
Or like a demon in a shroud.

And rearing Lindis backward press'd
Shook all her trembling bankes amaine ;
Then madly at the eygre's breast
Flung uppe her weltering walls again.
Then bankes came downe with ruin and rout—
Then beaten foam flew round about—
Then all the mighty floods were out.

JEAN INGELow

So farre, so fast the eygre drave,
The heart had hardly time to beat,
Before a shallow seething wave
Sobbed in the grasses at oure feet :
The feet had hardly time to flee
Before it brake against the knee,
And all the world was in the sea.

Upon the roofe we sate that night,
The noise of bells went sweeping by ;
I mark'd the lofty beacon light
Stream from the church tower, red and high—
A lurid mark and dread to see ;
And awsome bells they were to mee,
That in the dark rang ' Enderby '.

They rang the sailor lads to guide
From roofe to roofe who fearless row'd ;
And I—my sonne was at my side,
And yet the ruddy beacon glow'd ;
And yet he moan'd beneath his breath,
' O come in life, or come in death !
O lost ! my love, Elizabeth.'

And didst thou visit him no more ?
Thou didst, thou didst, my daughter deare ;
The waters laid thee at his doore,
Ere yet the early dawn was clear.
Thy pretty bairns in fast embrace,
The lifted sun shone on thy face,
Downe drifted to thy dwelling-place.

That flow strew'd wrecks about the grass,
That ebbe swept out the flocks to sea ;
A fatal ebbe and flow, alas !
To manye more than myne and mee :

JEAN INGELow

But each will mourn his own (she saith),
And sweeter woman ne'er drew breath
Than my sonne's wife, Elizabeth.

I shall never hear her more
By the reedy Lindis shore,
'Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!' calling,
Ere the early dewes be falling;
I shall never hear her song,
'Cusha! Cusha!' all along
Where the sunny Lindis floweth,
Goeth, floweth;
From the meads where melick groweth,
When the water winding down,
Onward floweth to the town.

I shall never see her more
Where the reeds and rushes quiver,
Shiver, quiver;
Stand beside the sobbing river,
Sobbing, throbbing, in its falling
To the sandy lonesome shore;
I shall never hear her calling,
Leave your meadow grasses mellow,
Mellow, mellow;
Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow;
Come uppe Whitefoot, come uppe Lightfoot;
Quit your pipes of parsley hollow,
Hollow, hollow;
Come uppe Lightfoot, rise and follow;
Lightfoot, Whitefoot,
From your clovers lift the head;
Come uppe Jetty, follow, follow,
Jetty, to the milking shed.

354.

*Apprenticed**He sings :*

COME out and hear the waters shoot, the owlet hoot,
the owlet hoot ;

Yon crescent moon, a golden boat, hangs dim behind
the tree, O !

The dropping thorn makes white the grass, O sweetest
lass, and sweetest lass ;

Come out and smell the ricks of hay adown the croft
with me, O !

She answers :

My granny nods before her wheel, and drops her reel,
and drops her reel ;

My father with his crony talks as gay as gay can be, O !
But all the milk is yet to skim, ere light wax dim, ere
light wax dim ;

How can I step adown the croft, my 'prentice lad, with
thee, O ?

He replies :

And must ye bide, yet waiting 's long, and love is strong,
and love is strong ;

And O, had I but served the time that takes so long
to flee, O !

And thou, my lass, by morning light wast all in white,
wast all in white,

And parson stood within the rails, a-marrying me and
thee, O !

JEAN INGELow

355.

For Exmoor

FOR Exmoor—

For Exmoor, where the red deer run, my weary
heart doth cry :

She that will a rover wed, far her feet shall hie.

Narrow, narrow, shows the street, dull the narrow sky.

—*Buy my cherries, whiteheart cherries, good my masters,
buy !*

For Exmoor—

O he left me, left alone, aye to think and sigh—

‘Lambs feed down yon sunny coombe, hind and yearling
shy

Mid the shrouding vapours walk now like ghosts on high.’

—*Buy my cherries, blackheart cherries, lads and lasses,
buy !*

For Exmoor—

Dear my dear, why did ye so ? Evil day have I ;

Mark no more the antler’d stag, hear the curlew cry,

Milking at my father’s gate while he leans anigh.

—*Buy my cherries, whiteheart, blackheart, golden girls,
O buy !*

THOMAS EDWARD BROWN

1830-1897

356.

Opifex

AS I was carving images from clouds,

And tinting them with soft ethereal dyes

Pressed from the pulp of dreams, one comes, and cries:—

‘Forbear !’ and all my heaven with gloom enshrouds.

THOMAS EDWARD BROWN

‘ Forbear ! Thou hast no tools wherewith to essay
The delicate waves of that elusive grain :
Wouldst have due recompense of vulgar pain ?
The potter’s wheel for thee, and some coarse clay !

‘ So work, if work thou must, O humbly skill’d !
Thou hast not known the Master ; in thy soul
His spirit moves not with a sweet control ;
Thou art outside, and art not of the guild.’

Thereat I rose, and from his presence pass’d,
But, going, murmur’d :—‘ To the God above,
Who holds my heart, and knows its store of love,
I turn from thee, thou proud iconoclast.’

Then on the shore God stoop’d to me, and said :—
‘ He spake the truth : even so the springs are set
That move thy life, nor will they suffer let,
Nor change their scope ; else, living, thou wert dead.

‘ This is thy life : indulge its natural flow,
And carve these forms. They yet may find a place
On shelves for them reserved. In any case,
I bid thee carve them, knowing what I know.’

357. *Catherine Kinrade*

[A poor Manxwoman, mother of four base-born children, sundry times (1713-1720) dragged through the sea for punishment by order of Thomas Wilson, Bishop of Sodor and Man.]

NONE spake when Wilson stood before
The throne—
And He that sat thereon
Spake not ; and all the presence-floor

THOMAS EDWARD BROWN

Burnt deep with blushes, as the angels cast
Their faces downwards. Then at last,
Awe-stricken, he was 'ware
How on the emerald stair
A woman sat, divinely clothed in white,
And at her knees four cherubs bright,
That laid
Their heads within her lap. Then, trembling, he essay'd
To speak :—' Christ's mother, pity me !'
Then answered she :—
' Sir, I am Catherine Kinrade.'
Even so—the poor dull brain,
Drench'd in unhallow'd fire,
It had no vigour to restrain—
God's image trodden in the mire
Of impious wrongs—whom last he saw
Gazing with animal awe
Before his harsh tribunal, proved unchaste,
Incorrigible, woman's form defaced
To uttermost ruin by no fault of hers—
So gave her to the torturers ;
And now—some vital spring adjusted,
Some faculty that rusted
Cleansed to legitimate use—
Some undeveloped action stirr'd, some juice
Of God's distilling dropt into the core
Of all her life—no more
In that dark grave entomb'd,
Her soul had bloom'd
To perfect woman—swift celestial growth
That mocks our temporal sloth—
To perfect woman—woman made to honour,
With all the glory of her youth upon her.
And from her lips and from her eyes there flow'd

THOMAS EDWARD BROWN

A smile that lit all heaven ; the angels smiled ;
God smiled, if that were smile beneath the state that
glow'd
Soft purple—and a voice :—‘ Be reconciled ! ’
So to his side the children crept,
And Catherine kiss'd him, and he wept.
Then said a seraph :—‘ Lo ! he is forgiven.’
And for a space again there was no voice in Heaven.

358. *The Organist in Heaven*

[SAMUEL SEBASTIAN WESLEY]

WHEN Wesley died, the Angelic orders,
To see him at the state,
Press'd so incontinent that the warders
Forgot to shut the gate.
So I, that hitherto had follow'd
As one with grief o'ercast,
Where for the doors a space was hollow'd,
Crept in, and heard what pass'd.
And God said :—‘ Seeing thou hast given
Thy life to my great sounds,
Choose thou through all the cirque of Heaven
What most of bliss redounds.’
Then Wesley said :—‘ I hear the thunder
Low growling from Thy seat—
Grant me that I may bind it under
The trampling of my feet.’
And Wesley said :—‘ See, lightning quivers
Upon the presence walls—
Lord, give me of it four great rivers,
To be my manuals.’

THOMAS EDWARD BROWN

And then I saw the thunder chidden
As slave to his desire ;
And then I saw the space bestridden
With four great bands of fire ;
And stage by stage, stop stop subtending,
Each lever strong and true,
One shape inextricable blending,
The awful organ grew.
Then certain angels clad the Master
In very marvellous wise,
Till clouds of rose and alabaster
Conceal'd him from mine eyes.
And likest to a dove soft brooding,
The innocent figure ran ;
So breathed the breath of his preluding,
And then the fugue began—
Began ; but, to his office turning,
The porter swung his key ;
Wherefore, although my heart was yearning,
I had to go ; but he
Play'd on ; and, as I downward clomb,
I heard the mighty bars
Of thunder-gusts, that shook heaven's dome,
And moved the balanced stars.

359.

Salve!

TO live within a cave—it is most good ;
But, if God make a day,
And some one come, and say,
'Lo ! I have gather'd faggots in the wood !'
E'en let him stay,
And light a fire, and fan a temporal mood !

THOMAS EDWARD BROWN

So sit till morning ! when the light is grown
That he the path can read,
Then bid the man God-speed !
His morning is not thine : yet must thou own
They have a cheerful warmth—those ashes on the stone.

360.

My Garden

A GARDEN is a lovesome thing, God wot !
Rose plot,
Fringed pool,
Fern'd grot—
The veriest school
Of peace ; and yet the fool
Contentds that God is not—
Not God ! in gardens ! when the eve is cool ?
Nay, but I have a sign ;
'Tis very sure God walks in mine.

361.

Preparation

HAST thou a cunning instrument of play,
'Tis well ; but see thou keep it bright,
And tuned to primal chords, so that it may
Be ready day and night.
For when He comes thou know'st not, who shall say :—
'These virginals are apt' ; and try a note,
And sit, and make sweet solace of delight,
That men shall stand to listen on the way,
And all the room with heavenly music float.

362. *When Love meets Love*

WHEN love meets love, breast urged to breast,
 God interposes,
 An unacknowledged guest,
 And leaves a little child among our roses.

We love, God makes : in our sweet mirth
 God spies occasion for a birth.
Then is it His, or is it ours ?
 I know not—He is fond of flowers.

EDWARD ROBERT BULWER LYTTON
 FIRST EARL OF LYTTON

1831-1802

363. *The Chess-Board*

I RENE, do you yet remember
 Ere we were grown so sadly wise,
 Those evenings in the bleak December,
 Curtain'd warm from the snowy weather,
 When you and I play'd chess together,
 Checkmated by each other's eyes ?
 Ah, still I see your soft white hand
 Hovering warm o'er Queen and Knight,
 Brave Pawns in valiant battle stand :
 The double Castles guard the wings :
 The Bishop, bent on distant things,
 Moves, sidling, through the fight,
 Our fingers touch ; our glances meet,
 And falter ; falls your golden hair
 Against my cheek ; your bosom sweet
 Is heaving. Down the field, your Queen
 Rides slow her soldiery all between,
 And checks me unaware.

EARL OF LYTTON

Ah me! the little battle's done,
Disperst is all its chivalry ;
Full many a move, since then, have we
'Mid Life's perplexing chequers made,
And many a game with Fortune play'd,—
What is it we have won?
This, this at least—if this alone ;—
That never, never, never more,
As in those old still nights of yore,
(Ere we were grown so sadly wise)
Can you and I shut out the skies,
Shut out the world, and wintry weather,
And, eyes exchanging warmth with eyes,
Play chess, as then we play'd, together!

364.

Tempora Acta

FOR the times which were (if any
Time be heroic) heroic indeed!
When the men were few,
And the deeds to do
Were mighty and many,
And each man in his hand held a noble deed.
Now the deeds are few,
And the men are many,
And each man has, at most, but a noble need.

365.

The Last Wish

SINCE all that I can ever do for thee
Is to do nothing, this my prayer must be:
That thou mayst never guess nor ever see
The all-endured this nothing-done costs me.

JOSEPH SKIPSEY

1832-1903

366. *The Violet and the Rose*

THE Violet invited my kiss,—
I kiss'd it and call'd it my bride :
' Was ever one slighted like this ? '
Sigh'd the Rose as it stood by my side.

My heart ever open to grief,
To comfort the fair one I turn'd :
' Of fickle ones thou art the chief ! '
Frown'd the Violet and pouted and mourn'd.

Then, to end all disputes I entwined
The love-stricken blossoms in one ;
But that instant their beauty declined,
And I wept for the deed I had done !

367. *A Merry Bee*

A GOLDEN bee a-cometh
O'er the mere, glassy mere,
And a merry tale he hummeth
In my ear.

How he seized and kiss'd a blossom
From its true thorny tree,
Pluck'd and placed in Annie's bosom,
Hums the bee !

368. *Dewdrop, Wind and Sun*

I

AH, be not vain ! In yon flower-bell
 As rare a pearl did I appear,
 As ever grew in ocean shell,
 To dangle at a Helen's ear.

So was I till a cruel blast
 Arose and swept me to the ground,
 When, in a jewel of the past,
 Earth but a drop of water found.

II

'Queen Pearl's our equal—nay,
 A fairer far am I,' May Dewdrop said,
 As Sol at break of day
 Did kiss the sparkler on her grass-blade bed.

'None may my charms resist !'
 'None,' Sol still kissing answer'd, when alas !
 The proud one turn'd to mist,
 And with her pride did into Lethe pass.

369. *Mother Wept*

MOTHER wept, and father sigh'd ;
 With delight aglow
 Cried the lad, 'To-morrow', cried,
 'To the pit I go.'

Up and down the place he sped,—
 Greeted old and young ;
 Far and wide the tidings spread ;
 Clapt his hands and sung.

JOSEPH SKIPSEY

Came his cronies ; some to gaze
Wrapp'd in wonder ; some
Free with counsel ; some with praise :
Some with envy dumb.

' May he ', many a gossip cried,
' Be from peril kept.'
Father hid his face and sigh'd,
Mother turn'd and wept.

SIR EDWIN ARNOLD

1832-1904

370. To a Pair of Egyptian Slippers

TINY slippers of gold and green,
Tied with a mouldering golden cord !
What pretty feet they must have been
When Caesar Augustus was Egypt's lord !
Somebody graceful and fair you were !
Not many girls could dance in these !
When did your shoemaker make you, dear,
Such a nice pair of Egyptian ' threes ' ?

Where were you measured ? In Saïs, or On,
Memphis, or Thebes, or Pelusium ?
Fitting them neatly your brown toes upon,
Lacing them deftly with finger and thumb,
I seem to see you !—so long ago,
Twenty-one centuries, less or more !
And here are your sandals : yet none of us know
What name, or fortune, or face you bore.

SIR EDWIN ARNOLD

Your lips would have laugh'd, with a rosy scorn,
If the merchant, or slave-girl, had mockingly said,
'The feet will pass, but the shoes they have worn
Two thousand years onward Time's road shall tread,
And still be footgear as good as new !'
To think that calf-skin, gilded and stitch'd,
Should Rome and the Pharaohs outlive—and you
Be gone, like a dream, from the world you bewitch'd !

Not that we mourn you ! 'Twere too absurd !
You have been such a long while away !
Your dry spiced dust would not value one word
Of the soft regrets that my verse could say.
Sorrow and Pleasure, and Love and Hate,
If you ever felt them, have vaporized hence
To this odour—so subtle and delicate—
Of myrrh, and cassia, and frankincense.

Of course they embalm'd you ! Yet not so sweet
Were aloes and nard, as the youthful glow
Which Amenti stole when the small dark feet
Wearied of treading our world below.
Look ! it was flood-time in valley of Nile,
Or a very wet day in the Delta, dear !
When your slippers tripp'd lightly their latest mile—
The mud on the soles renders that fact clear.

You knew Cleopatra, no doubt ! You saw
Antony's galleys from Actium come.
But there ! if questions could answers draw
From lips so many a long age dumb,
I would not tease you with history,
Nor vex your heart for the men that were ;
The one point to learn that would fascinate me
Is, where and what are you to-day, my dear !

SIR EDWIN ARNOLD

You died, believing in Horus and Pasht,
Isis, Osiris, and priestly lore ;
And found, of course, such theories smash'd
By actual fact on the heavenly shore.
What next did you do ? Did you transmigrate ?
Have we seen you since, all modern and fresh ?
Your charming soul—so I calculate—
Mislaid its mummy, and sought new flesh.

Were you she whom I met at dinner last week,
With eyes and hair of the Ptolemy black,
Who still of this find in the Fayoum would speak,
And to Pharaohs and scarabs still carry us back ?
A scent of lotus about her hung,
And she had such a far-away wistful air
As of somebody born when the Earth was young ;
And she wore of gilt slippers a lovely pair.

Perchance you were married ? These might have been
Part of your *trousseau*—the wedding shoes ;
And you laid them aside with the garments green,
And painted clay Gods which a bride would use ;
And, may be, to-day, by Nile's bright waters
Damsels of Egypt in gowns of blue—
Great-great-great—very great—grand-daughters
Owe their shapely insteps to you !

But vainly I beat at the bars of the Past,
Little green slippers with golden strings !
For all you can tell is that leather will last
When loves, and delightings, and beautiful things
Have vanish'd, forgotten—No ! not quite that !
I catch some gleam of the grace you wore
When you finish'd with Life's daily pit-a-pat,
And left your shoes at Death's bedroom door.

SIR EDWIN ARNOLD

You were born in the Egypt which did not doubt ;
You were never sad with our new-fashion'd sorrows :
You were sure, when your play-days on Earth ran out,
Of play-times to come, as we of our morrows !
Oh, wise little Maid of the Delta ! I lay
Your shoes in your mummy-chest back again,
And wish that one game we might merrily play
At ' Hunt the Slippers '—to see it all plain.

ADAM LINDSAY GORDON

1833-1870

371. *Whisperings in Wattle-Boughs*

O GAILY sings the bird ! and the wattle-boughs are
, stirr'd

And rustled by the scented breath of spring ;
O, the dreary wistful longing ! O, the faces that are
thronging !

O, the voices that are vaguely whispering !

O, tell me, father mine, ere the good ship cross'd the
brine,

On the gangway one mute hand-grip we exchang'd,
Do you, past the grave, employ, for your stubborn, reckless
boy,

Those petitions that in life were ne'er estrang'd ?

O, tell me, sister dear, parting word and parting tear
Never pass'd between us ;—let me bear the blame,
Are you living, girl, or dead ? bitter tears since then I've
shed

For the lips that lisp'd with mine a mother's name.

ADAM LINDSAY GORDON

O, tell me, ancient friend, ever ready to defend
In our boyhood, at the base of life's long hill,
Are you waking yet or sleeping? have you left this vale
of weeping?

Or do you, like your comrade, linger still?

O, whisper, buried love, is there rest and peace above?—
There is little hope or comfort here below;
On your sweet face lies the mould, and your bed is
straight and cold—

Near the harbour where the sea-tides ebb and flow.

All silent—they are dumb—and the breezes go and come
With an apathy that mocks at man's distress;
Laugh, scoffer, while you may! I could bow me down
and pray

For an answer that might stay my bitterness.

O, harshly screams the bird! and the wattle-bloom is
stirr'd;

There's a sullen, weird-like whisper in the bough:

'Aye, kneel, and pray, and weep, but HIS BELOVED SLEEP
CAN NEVER BE DISTURB'D BY SUCH AS THOU!'

372. *The Sick Stockrider*

HOLD hard, Ned! Lift me down once more, and
lay me in the shade.

Old man, you've had your work cut out to guide
Both horses, and to hold me in the saddle when I sway'd,
All through the hot, slow, sleepy, silent ride.

The dawn at 'Moorabinda' was a mist-rack dull and dense,
The sunrise was a sullen, sluggish lamp;

I was dozing in the gateway at Arbuthnot's bound'ry
fence,

I was dreaming on the Limestone cattle camp.

ADAM LINDSAY GORDON

We cross'd the creek at Carricksford, and sharply through
the haze,
And suddenly the sun shot flaming forth ;
To southward lay 'Katâwa', with the sandpeaks all ablaze,
And the flush'd fields of Glen Lomond lay to north.
Now westward winds the bridle path that leads to Lindis-
farm,
And yonder looms the double-headed Bluff ;
From the far side of the first hill, when the skies are clear
and calm,
You can see Sylvester's woolshed fair enough.
Five miles we used to call it from our homestead to the
place
Where the big tree spans the roadway like an arch ;
'Twas here we ran the dingo down that gave us such
a chase
Eight years ago—or was it nine ?—last March.
'Twas merry in the glowing morn, among the gleaming
grass,
To wander as we've wander'd many a mile,
And blow the cool tobacco cloud, and watch the white
wreaths pass,
Sitting loosely in the saddle all the while.
'Twas merry 'mid the blackwoods, when we spied the
station roofs,
To wheel the wild scrub cattle at the yard,
With a running fire of stockwhips and a fiery run of hoofs ;
O! the hardest day was never then too hard !
Aye! we had a glorious gallop after 'Starlight' and his
gang,
When they bolted from Sylvester's on the flat ;
How the sun-dried reed-beds crackled, how the flint-
strewn ranges rang
To the strokes of 'Mountaineer' and 'Acrobat'.

ADAM LINDSAY GORDON

Hard behind them in the timber, harder still across the
heath,

Close beside them through the tea-tree scrub we dash'd;
And the golden-tinted fern leaves, how they rustled
underneath!

And the honeysuckle osiers, how they crash'd!

We led the hunt throughout, Ned, on the chestnut and
the grey,

And the troopers were three hundred yards behind,
While we emptied our six-shooters on the bushrangers
at bay,

In the creek with stunted box-tree for a blind!

There you grappled with the leader, man to man and
horse to horse,

And you roll'd together when the chestnut rear'd;
He blazed away and miss'd you in that shallow water-
course—

A narrow shave—his powder singed your beard!

In these hours when life is ebbing, how those days when
life was young

Come back to us; how clearly I recall

Even the yarns Jack Hall invented, and the songs Jem
Roper sung;

And where are now Jem Roper and Jack Hall?

Aye! nearly all our comrades of the old colonial school,

Our ancient boon companions, Ned, are gone;

Hard livers for the most part, somewhat reckless as a rule,
It seems that you and I are left alone.

There was Hughes, who got in trouble through that
business with the cards,

It matters little what became of him;